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INTRODUCTION

TO

THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS.

INTRODUCTION
TO
THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS.

BY
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CATHOLIC EPISTLES," "A COMMENTARY ON THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,"
"EXEGETICAL STUDIES," "MESSIANIC PROPHECY," BEING
THE BAIRD LECTURES FOR 1879, ETC.



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MDCCCXCI.

TO

PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D., LL.D.,

PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY IN THE UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
NEW YORK,

This Work

IS

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

IN

TESTIMONY OF THE AUTHOR'S APPRECIATION OF HIS CHRISTIAN
CHARACTER AND PROFOUND SCHOLARSHIP.

P R E F A C E.

THIS work is intended to form a companion-volume to my two previous Introductions, the one to the Pauline, and the other to the Catholic Epistles. It does not enter upon any exegetical explanation of the writings of St. John, which is the province of the commentator, but discusses, chiefly in a historical manner, the topics which are properly of an introductory character, such as the authorship of these writings, their date, the design of their composition, and the peculiarities which belong to them. The question of their inspiration is considered as foreign to the subject, because the authenticity of the writings must first be determined before we enter upon any inquiry as to their Divine origin.

The authenticity of John's Gospel is the great question of modern criticism, and must be regarded as still unsettled. In this country the greatest theologians, with the exception of Dr. Samuel Davidson, are to be placed on the positive side; but the case is otherwise in Germany, where opinions are nearly equally divided. Whilst Weiss, Zahn, Luthardt, and Beyschlag maintain the Johannine origin of the Fourth Gospel, Schürer, Harnack, Pfleiderer, Weizäcker, and Hilgenfeld still rank among those who deny it. I have endeavoured to

discuss the question with all fairness, have frankly admitted the difficulties which still exist, and have stated the objections of those belonging to the negative side of the question, and given to them their full force. I am not so vain as to think that I have added much to the solution of the problem; but this only I would affirm, that whilst there are admittedly difficulties in the adoption of the supposition that John is the author of the Fourth Gospel, there exist much greater difficulties in the supposition that this author was an anonymous writer of the second century. In a letter with which Dr. Schaff favoured me, that learned theologian observes: "The Johannine problem is the most difficult in the literature of the New Testament. That Gospel is a mystery as the work of the beloved disciple, but a still greater mystery if the work of some unknown Christian Plato of the second century. Hase says that one risks his scientific reputation now-a-days (in Germany) by conceding the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel; but significantly adds, 'It has not been so once, and it may not be so always.' I strongly hope and believe that some master-critic will rise before long to turn the tables, and to restore once more this Gospel of Gospels to its rightful place, which it held in the heart of Christendom from St. Augustine and St. Chrysostom down to Schleiermacher and Lücke."

Schürer, in a remarkable address given at a theological conference at Giessen on 20th June 1889, holds that the two parties, those who maintain and those who deny the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel, are now approaching to a reconciliation. On the one

hand, he observes, the defenders of the Fourth Gospel admit that the discourses of our Lord are influenced more or less by the subjectivity of the author—his Christian Platonism; whilst, on the other hand, the opponents have departed from most of the objections advanced by Baur and his school, both as to the date of the Gospel and as to its tendency, and now admit a genuine kernel of the Apostle's teaching, which was worked over by one or more of his disciples. Recent discoveries of ancient manuscripts—as, for example, the full text of the Clementine Homilies, the *Philosophoumena* of Hippolytus, and a more rigid examination of the writings of the Fathers, especially of Justin Martyr, and of the references to the Fourth Gospel by the early Gnostic writers—have all been in favour of the Johannine authorship. On this, Dr. Sanday, who, in his work on the Fourth Gospel, rested the evidence of its genuineness on internal considerations, and declared that the external evidence for and against was nearly equally balanced, in his inaugural address on the Study of the New Testament, delivered before the University of Oxford in 1883, now says: “It is now some ten years since I published a book (*Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*) on the subject, and in the meantime the question has not stood still. I have already alluded to the remarkable change in the aspect of the external evidence. When I wrote, I excused myself from dealing with this on the ground that its results were inconclusive. This could not be said now. Justin, Tatian, the Clementine Homilies no longer give an uncertain sound. If only the textual argument, of which I have

spoken, holds good—and I have great confidence that it will be found to hold good—then it seems to me that the date of the Gospel is all but demonstrated.”

The three Epistles of St. John have already been fully discussed in my *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*. At one time I thought of restricting this present work to a consideration of the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse, omitting the Epistles; but, as many of my readers may not possess my former work, and as an Introduction to the Johannine writings would be obviously incomplete were the consideration of the Epistles omitted, I have thought it, upon the whole, better to discuss these Epistles in an abbreviated form, referring my readers for their more ample discussion to what I have already written in my previous work.

Attached to this Introduction to the Johannine writings there are certain dissertations or appendices on important subjects connected with these writings. Were the work simply an introduction in the restricted sense, such dissertations might well be considered irrelevant; but it professes to embrace other questions connected with the writings of the Apostle. Attached to the Gospel of St. John are important discussions concerning the Logos, and the much-controverted subject, the precise day of our Lord's death. In the dissertation on the Theology of St. John, attached to the First Epistle, I have perhaps trespassed into the department of Biblical Theology; but a work, specially treating of the writings of the great Apostle, would have been imperfect without a brief statement of his

views. I have treated the Apocalypse in an entirely historical manner, and have not had the temerity to venture into any discussion of the meaning of this most mysterious of all Scriptural books. In the dissertation attached to it on "The Systems of Interpretation," I have not given the preference to any system, as I consider all the schemes of interpretation hitherto advanced eminently unsatisfactory; the true key to unlock the secrets of the apocalyptic visions yet remains to be discovered. The last dissertation, on "The Influence of John on Christianity," is very imperfect and fragmentary; it is a subject which requires a volume for itself; and it is hoped that what has already been done for the brother Apostles, Paul and Peter, will also be done for John. In that dissertation I have emphasised the influence of Schleiermacher in Germany, and do not think that I have exaggerated its importance; and on this I am in accord with the great German theologians; but opinions differ greatly on the corresponding influence of Maurice in England, and on this point I may perhaps be fairly charged with exaggeration.

I regret to say that there are two important works which I have not been able to use, as they were published after my book was written, and one of them after I had given to it a final revision. The first of these is the second edition of Weizäcker's *Das apostolische Zeitalter der christlichen Kirche* (1890). The first edition I had not in my possession. This great work is an introduction to the books of the New Testament, arranged historically according to the date when, in Weizäcker's

opinion, they were written. The judgment of a theologian of such eminence and fairness cannot be lightly passed over. I have only been able to insert his opinions in the notes attached to my work. The other book is the *Bampton Lectures* for 1890, by Archdeacon Watkins, *Modern Criticism considered in its Relation to the Fourth Gospel*. This book has been so recently published that I could not possibly use it to any extent without deferring the publication of my own work; I therefore judged it the better course not to employ it at all.

In the quotations from the Scriptures I have in general adopted the Revised Version, which, although there is no reasonable expectation of its ever superseding the Authorised Version, gives the translation of the words according to the most approved text and the judgment of eminent critics. Occasionally I have departed from it, where I considered that the preference should be given to the Authorised text, or to an independent translation. The quotations from the Fathers are in general taken from the *Quellensammlung* of Kirchhofer, a work which has superseded the earlier work of Lardner. In the translation of these quotations, I have often consulted the original, but in general have been indebted to Clark's *Ante-Nicene Fathers*.

The substance of a few of the dissertations have already appeared in various periodicals. I may particularly mention an article on the theology of St. John in the *British and Foreign Review*; an article on the day of our Lord's death in the *Theological Monthly*; and an article on the Logos of Philo and St. John in

the American *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*. At the same time these articles have in this work undergone much alteration.

It is now my pleasing duty to acknowledge my obligations to some kind friends and coadjutors for their assistance. I have especially to return my thanks to the Rev. William P. Paterson, B.D., minister of Crieff, for his verification of my references, and for important and valuable suggestions. It is a cause of thankfulness that the Church of Scotland possesses a man of such eminent abilities, extensive learning, and diversified acquirements. I have also to thank the Rev. Henry Wotherspoon, M.A., minister of Burnbank, Hamilton, another of our promising young clergymen, for kindly assisting in the correction of the press. And last, but not least, to one who has been always ready to assist and encourage me in this and in all my other literary labours.

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THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS.



GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

LITERATURE.—Among the biographers of St. John may be mentioned Krenkel: *Der Apostel Johannes*, Berlin, 1871. Krenkel denies the Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel, and endeavours to construct a life of John from the Synoptists, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse, altogether overlooking the Gospel of John. Niese: *Das Leben des heiligen Johannes*, Leipzig, 1878. This is rather a devotional book than a critical and historical sketch of the life of the Apostle. Macdonald: *Life and Writings of St. John*, London, second edition, 1880, written in imitation of Conybeare and Howson's *Life of St. Paul*. Trench, Rev. F.: *Life and Character of St. John*, London, 1850, a work now out of print, containing an interesting series of lectures on the life of St. John.

To these have to be added the sketches of the life of John in Encyclopædias and Commentaries, as by Ebrard in Herzog's *Real-Encyclopädie*, Tholuck in Kitto's *Cyclopædia*, and Holtzmann in Schenkel's *Bibel-Lexicon*; also the sketches by Godet, Lange, and Luthardt in their Commentaries.

The later part of John's life, especially the question as to his residence in Ephesus, has a literature of its own. This was first called in question by Lützelberger (*Die kirchliche Tradition, über den Apostel Johannes und seine Schriften in ihrer Grundlosigkeit nachweisen*. Leipzig, 1840), and he has been followed by Keim (*Geschichte Jesus von Nazara*, Zurich, 1867), by Holtzmann (Schenkel's *Bibel-Lexicon*, 1871, and *Einleitung in das N. T.*, Freiburg, 1885), and by Scholten (*Der Apostel Johannes in Kleinasien*, translated from the Dutch into German by Spiegel, Berlin, 1872). On the other hand, the Ephesian residence is maintained by Grimm

(Ersch und Grüber, *Allgemeine Encyklopädie*, Leipzig, 1843), by Hilgenfeld in his *Zeitschrift*, 1867, by Steitz (*Studien und Kritiken*, 1868), by Krenkel (*Apostel Johannes*, Berlin, 1871, p. 132 ff., "Johannes in Ephesus"), by Mangold, Luthard, Kiel, and others.

I.—SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF ST. JOHN.

It is a matter of surprise that there are so few biographies of the Apostle John. Whilst the lives of Paul are numerous, and those of Peter are not rare, those books which are devoted to a special treatment of the life of John are inconsiderable both in number and in scientific value. The reason of this scarcity is difficult to ascertain, as the commentaries on the Gospel of John are more numerous than the commentaries on any other book of the New Testament, and as our interest in the person of John is, to say the least, as great as our interest in any of the other Apostles. This apparent neglect may, however, be largely explained by the fact that the life of John, in its earlier period, is so interwoven with that of his Master, that it has been exhaustively treated in the great modern Lives of Christ; whilst the comparatively meagre details of the later period had little to attract the biographer in comparison with the copious materials of the life of Paul, and little to interest the controversialist in comparison with the question, so important to Roman Catholicism, "Was St. Peter ever in Rome?"

The sources of the life of John are first and chiefly the Four Gospels. We do not now enter upon any discussion concerning the genuineness of these sources; we shall afterwards, in the course of this treatise, con-

sider at length the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel; but meanwhile we assume that all contain authentic records of the life of John. In the first three or the Synoptical Gospels, John is mentioned as taking part in certain incidents, but it is from the Fourth Gospel that we learn most of the particulars of his life during the lifetime of our Lord. Next to the Gospels, as an authentic source of information, is the Acts of the Apostles. In this book John is seldom mentioned. He is alluded to as being directly concerned in only two important incidents, and on both occasions in connection with Peter—the cure of the lame man at the Temple gate, and the preaching of the Gospel in Samaria. In the Epistles of St. Paul he is only once incidentally mentioned, as one of the three pillars of the Church, and as being present at the Council of Jerusalem. From the two extant private letters of John some events of his life may with a certain degree of probability be inferred. Assuming that he is the author of the Apocalypse, we learn that there was an intimate relationship between him and certain Churches of Proconsular Asia, and that he resided for a time, perhaps in a state of banishment, in the island of Patmos, in the Ægean Sea. Several of the traditions of the Church concerning this Apostle are so strongly characteristic, and so very simple and natural, as to bear the marks of authenticity. What adds to the value of these traditions is that we have not a little information from Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of John (see below). From these sources, meagre and imperfect as they are, a life of the Apostle may with some degree of probability be constructed.

In several respects John was one of the most prominent of the Apostles. He, of all his fellow-Apostles, appears to have borne the closest resemblance to the human character of our Lord. The similarity of their dispositions drew toward him the special love of the Saviour, and earned for him the dignified appellation of "the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who leaned on His breast at supper."¹ There was no chasm in his life; no incident or crisis which broke it up into two parts—a life before conversion and a life after conversion, as was so evident in the case of Paul; no violent struggle carried on within him between good and evil. He was one of those rare and favoured persons who are sanctified from their very birth, into whose mind religion is instilled at the dawn of intelligence, upon whom the Spirit's influences descend like the gentle dew from heaven, and the purity of whose character is seldom marred. "John," observes Schaff, "is the representative of those disciples who are gradually drawn into fellowship with the Redeemer without any violent inward struggles or unusual outward changes, whilst the Apostle Paul furnishes the most striking example of a sudden conversion. The first mode of conversion is especially suited to mild, contemplative, modest characters, such as Thomas à Kempis, Melancthon, Spener, Bengel, Zinzendorf; the other to such strong, impetuous, resolute, independent natures, as Tertullian, Augustine, Luther, Farel, and Calvin."² John was pre-eminently the Apostle of contemplation.

¹ John xxi. 20; see also John xiii. 23, xix. 26, xx. 2, xxi. 7.

² *History of the Apostolic Church*, vol. ii. p. 57.

He was not, like Paul, the Apostle of action, the founder of churches, the prince of missionaries ; he did not so much lead, as follow ; his task was not so much to convert the heathen, as to edify the brethren. He was not, like Peter, impulsive, ever ready to come forward as the spokesman of the Apostles ; he was calm and reserved, living in a serene heaven of his own, removed from the turmoil of the world.

In all probability, John was the youngest of the twelve Apostles. According to a credible tradition, he lived to an advanced age, and survived until the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98). If so, he must have been comparatively young when called to be a disciple of Christ, nor is there any improbability in the supposition of Krenkel¹ that he was ten years younger than our Lord. John was born when Augustus was Emperor of Rome, Quirinius governor of Syria, Archelaus tetrarch or perhaps Coponius governor of Judæa, Herod Antipas tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis.

The name John is Hebrew (יִחְזְקִיָּהּ, Johanan), and denotes "Jehovah is gracious" or the "Grace of Jehovah."² It is of rare occurrence in the Old Testament ;³ the only one of any note there mentioned, bearing the name, is Johanan the son of Kareah (Jer. xli. 11). Under the Maccabees the name was not so uncommon, as it was borne by their first monarch, John Hyrcanus. It occurs four times in the New Testament.

¹ Krenkel, *Der Apostel Johannes*.

² Gensenius gives the interpretation, "The Gift of God" = Theodore.

³ Ten persons of this name are mentioned in the Old Testament.—Dr. Lindsay Alexander in Kitto's *Cyclopædia*, vol. ii. p. 616.

It was bestowed by Divine revelation on the forerunner of our Lord. Mention is made of John, a member of the high priest's family (Acts iv. 6), and of John whose surname was Mark (Acts xii. 12).

Besides his proper name, John had also the surname Boanerges given him and his brother James by the Lord (Mark iii. 17). Boanerges is an Aramaic word, compounded of בְּנֵי¹ and רָגַשׁ, denoting the sons of tumult or thunder.² We cannot, with Tholuck, infer that this name was conferred by our Lord in the way of censure, "to remind them (James and John) always of the internal foe with whom they had to contend."³ Nor do we think that the reference is to the preaching of John, indicating that it was so overpowering that it carried all before it. There is no proof that John's preaching possessed that peculiarity; the designation would be more applicable to the preaching of Peter or Paul. The reference is rather to the occasional fiery outbursts of indignation against evil of which his nature, in spite of its deep-seated calm, was capable.⁴ We have several examples of this ardent disposition, as when James and John wished to call fire from heaven to consume the inhospitable Samaritans (Luke ix. 54), and when John forbade the casting out devils in the name

¹ Sheva (:), pronounced in Aramaic *oa*.

² רָגַשׁ, in Hebrew a *noisy crowd* (Psalm lv. 15); in the Syriac, *thunder*.

³ Trench, *Studies in the Gospel*, p. 146. Weiss observes: "As the epithet was applied not to either separately, but to the brothers as a pair, it cannot have been intended to be constantly borne by them, and is therefore not analogous to the name of Peter."—Weiss' *Meyer*, *in loco*.

⁴ "Our Lord herein," says Cave, "had respect to the furious and resolute disposition of these two brothers, who seem to have been of a more fierce and fiery temper than the rest of the Apostles."—*Lives of the Apostles*, p. 252.

of Christ (Mark ix. 38); and even in his old age, when he ordered his converts to refuse the rites of hospitality to false teachers (2 John 10), and when, according to a credible legend, he rushed out of a bath to escape from the neighbourhood of the heresiarch Cerinthus. And although in the Gospel and in the Epistles love is the predominant feature of John's character, yet in the Apocalypse he writes as the son of Thunder, denouncing the judgments of God against the ungodly. There is no contradiction between the Apostle of thunder and the Apostle of love.

The birthplace of John is generally supposed to be Bethsaida, on the western side of the Sea of Galilee. This was the native place of Andrew and Peter;¹ and as James and John were partners with them in the occupation of fishing, it is natural to suppose that it was their birthplace also. There were two Bethsaidas, the one on the western side of the lake, in the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas, and the other on the eastern side, in the tetrarchy of Philip, called Bethsaida Julias.² The western Bethsaida, in Galilee, is here meant. It was about two miles north of Capernaum, near the confluence of the Jordan. There are now no remains of it, and no tradition as to its locality. Dr. Robinson identifies it with Ain et Tabigah, a short distance from Khan Minyeh, supposed to be the

¹ John i. 44. Also Philip, another of the Apostles, was a native of Bethsaida.

² This has been called in question by Dr. Thomson, whose opinion deserves much consideration. "I believe that there was but one Bethsaida at the head of the lake, and that it was at the mouth of the Jordan."—*The Land and the Book*, pp. 373, 374.

ancient Capernaum.¹ It was the frequent scene of our Lord's ministry, and was one of the towns denounced by Him on account of its rejection of His message (Matt. xi. 21).

Various notices in Scripture indicate that John was born in a better social position than the rest of the Apostles.² The trade in fish carried on by the family on the Sea of Galilee was not necessarily a poor employment. We are informed that Zebedee and his sons had hired servants with them in their boats (Mark i. 20). His mother appears to have been possessed of means, as she is classed among those women who ministered unto our Lord in Galilee, and prepared sweet spices to anoint His body at His death (Matt. xxvii. 55, 56). And it would appear from an incidental notice in his Gospel that John had a house, or at least hired lodgings, in Jerusalem (John xix. 27); for when our Lord committed His mother to his care, we are informed that from that hour John took her to his own house.

It is generally supposed that John is meant by the disciple who was known to the high priest. "Simon Peter," we read, "followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. That disciple was known to the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door without. Then

¹ Robinson's *Researches*, vol. iii. p. 290 ff. There is still much uncertainty regarding the identification of Capernaum and Bethsaida. See Schaff's *Bible Dictionary*; Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 440; Farrar's *Life of Christ*, vol. i. p. 404; Ritter's *Geography of Palestine*, vol. ii. p. 269; Caspari's *Introduction to the Life of Christ*, p. 86.

² Chrysostom, indeed, speaks of the extreme poverty and humility of his lot; but this is a purely rhetorical exaggeration.

went out that other disciple, who was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter" (John xviii. 15, 16). It is argued that the manner in which the disciple is here mentioned points to John's method of designating himself. The words *ὁ ἄλλος μαθητής*, it is said, can only denote "the other disciple," namely, the disciple known to the reader, whom it was unnecessary to name, and who can only be John.¹ Various reasons have been assigned to account for his acquaintance with the high priest, whether Annas or Caiaphas be meant.² According to Ewald, John was related to the priestly race through his mother Salome. He supposes that both she and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were of the tribe of Levi, and that this accounts for the tradition that John in after life wore the petalon or priestly coronet.³ But for the Levitical descent of Mary there is not the slightest ground;⁴ and the tradition that he wore the priestly coronet is a mere invention for the glorification of John. Others think that John became acquainted with the family of the high priest through his business as a chief fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. Thus Archdeacon Farrar observes: "To me it seems probable that he knew Annas and his family only in the way of business."⁵ Others suppose that John's general residence, perhaps in the way of his trade, was not in Galilee, but in Jerusalem. They infer from John xix.

¹ Meyer, *in loco*.

² Annas, to whom Jesus was brought, is the person here meant.

³ Ewald's *History of Israel*, vol. vi. p. 181, translation.

⁴ Many of the Fathers, however, held this; but it is opposed to the genealogies, and to the express statement in Heb. vii. 13, 14.

⁵ Farrar's *Early Days of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 130.

27 that he had a house of his own in Jerusalem; that Zebedee, as a master-fisherman, sent his youngest son to superintend his business in the capital; and that in this way he became acquainted with the high priest's family. "John's acquaintance with the high priest," observes Tholuck, "seems to indicate that he lived in Jerusalem, and belonged to the wealthier class."¹

But it is questionable whether John is meant by "that disciple who was known to the high priest." It is to be observed that in the best manuscripts and versions the article *ὁ* before *ἄλλος* is wanting,² and is now generally omitted by editors; so that the word *ἄλλος* is to be translated not "the other," but "another disciple." Besides, this is not the mode in which John generally describes himself; not indefinitely *ἄλλος μαθητής*, "another disciple," but definitely *ὁ μαθητής ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς*, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." The only exception to this is his mention of himself in the company of the Baptist (John i. 35, 40); but this was before his acquaintance with Christ. It can hardly be imagined that any of our Lord's immediate disciples—the fishermen and tax-gatherers of Galilee—could be in such a high social position as to be acquainted with Annas and Caiaphas, who were at the head of the Jewish aristocracy. Besides, the character of John, especially his hatred of evil, the moral indignation against sin which on many occasions he displayed, would have prevented him forming an acquaintance with those who belonged to the Sadducean sect, and who were not even believers

¹ Kitto's *Cyclopædia*, article *John the Apostle*.

² Omitted in *8*, A. B. D., and in the Syriac and Coptic versions.

in a future state. "It is not easy to imagine," observes Archdeacon Farrar, "how a Galilean fisherman should have known anything personal of those wealthy Sadducean aristocrats, with whom he had not a single thought or a single sympathy in common."¹

It is therefore somewhat doubtful if John is here meant; nor are we obliged to guess what disciple is here referred to. Archbishop Whately strangely imagines that he is Judas Iscariot,² who was certainly known to the high priest, but to whom Peter would have come under no obligation. Others think that he was either Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea, both of whom were members of the Sanhedrim. Godet suggests James, the brother of John, whom he might be expected to name, as is his wont in referring to any of his own family, by a circumlocution.³ But it is better to affirm indefinitely that he was some unknown person. "Some," observes Calvin, "have been led astray by a slight conjecture to suppose that this disciple was the Evangelist John, because he is accustomed to speak of himself without mentioning his name. But what intimacy with a proud high priest could John have, who was a mean fisherman? And how was it possible for him, being one of Christ's household, to be in the habit of visiting the house of the high priest? It is more probable that he was not one of the twelve, but that he is called a disciple because he had embraced the doctrine of the Son of God."⁴

¹ Farrar's *Early Days of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 130.

² Whately on *Bacon's Essays*, p. 458. So also Heumann.

³ Godet's *Commentary*, *in loco*.

⁴ Calvin on John xviii. 15. So also St. Augustine. At the same time

The name of John's father was Zebedee (*Ζεβέδαϊος*). When our Lord called to the discipleship the brothers James and John, they were with their father Zebedee mending their nets (Mark i. 19, 20). We know little about him. From his readiness to allow his sons to follow Christ, and his wife to minister unto Him of her substance, we may infer that he was one of those who, like the aged Simeon, waited for the consolation of Israel (Luke ii. 25).

We know more of his mother. She is usually called in the Gospels "the mother of Zebedee's children;" but it is inferred from a comparison of passages that she is the same as Salome.¹ The Fathers suppose that there was a connection or relationship between Salome the mother of John, and Mary the mother of Jesus, but they differ as to the nature of this relationship. Epiphanius and Theophylact suppose that she was the daughter of Joseph, the husband of the Virgin, by a previous marriage;² whilst others think that she was the daughter of Cleophas, the brother of Joseph, and was brought up by Joseph as his own daughter. All such suppositions are examples of the vagaries in which the Fathers indulged.

the question must be left *in dubio*. If John is the disciple here meant, then he was present at our Lord's trial before Caiaphas and Pilate.

¹ In St. Matthew's Gospel we learn that there followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, and stood by the cross, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children (Matt. xxvii. 56); whilst in the parallel passage in St. Mark's Gospel, the names of these pious women of Galilee are given as Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome (Mark xv. 40); from which it is reasonably inferred that Salome is identical with the mother of Zebedee's children.

² Lardner's *Works*, vol. iii. p. 87, 4to edition.

Another supposition, more plausible and more scriptural, is that Salome, the mother of John, was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The subject is interesting, and although the relationship cannot be positively asserted, yet there are reasons for the supposition. We are informed that there stood at the cross of Jesus "His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene" (John xix. 25). It has been generally supposed that only three women are here mentioned, but this opinion has been recently called in question.¹ It has been maintained that four women are mentioned, named in pairs; the first pair being our Lord's mother and her sister, whose name is not stated, and the second pair being the two Maries, Mary the wife of Cleophas and Mary Magdalene; and as we know from the other Gospels that Salome was present at the crucifixion (Matt. xxvii. 56; Mark xv. 40), it has been inferred that she is the unnamed sister of our Lord's mother. This opinion has several reasons in its favour. It avoids the difficulty of supposing that our Lord's mother and her sister bore the same name, a circumstance of very rare occurrence, and consequently highly improbable.² On the supposition that four women are here meant, the number stated in John's Gospel corresponds with the number given by the Synoptists. In the other Gospels we find three women mentioned, the mother of Jesus being omitted, namely, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James

¹ Wieseler appears to have been the first who started this opinion. *Studien und Kritiken*, 1840, No. 3, p. 648 ff.

² Godet's suggestion that sister-in-law may be meant, is an evasion, not an argument.

and Joses, and Salome. Now John must have known that his own mother was present at the crucifixion, and it is improbable that he would have omitted all allusion to her when mentioning the women who stood at the cross. That he does not mention her by name is entirely in accordance with his manner. It illustrates the same reserve of style which leads him to mention himself, not by name, but only by circumlocution, as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and never to mention his brother James, and only once his father, Zebedee (John xxi. 2). Besides, it is to be observed that the received text admits of being read as if four women were mentioned. The mention of their names in pairs is similar to the manner in which the names of the Apostles are given.¹ Yet it must be allowed that there are several difficulties in the way of this supposition.²

If we adopt the opinion that Salome was the sister of the Virgin—an opinion supported by plausible reasons, and maintained by eminent theologians³—it will follow that John was a cousin of our Lord. This may account for many things in the evangelical narrative. It would afford a reason for the boldness of the request of Salome on behalf of her sons to the Lord,

¹ The Syriac, Ethiopic, and Persian versions insert a copula after "his mother's sister," and thus interpret the passage as if four women were meant. So also Tischendorf (7th edit.) in his punctuation adopts the same interpretation, indicating that the names are mentioned in pairs.

² See for a fuller discussion of the subject Gloag's *Exegetical Studies*, Exposition IV., "The Women at the Cross."

³ This opinion is adopted by Wieseler, Lange, Lücke, Ewald, and Meyer; and, among English critics, by Alford, Farrar, Bishop Lightfoot, Geikie, Westcott, and Milligan. Other theologians, as Neander, Olshausen, Ebrard, Godet, Luthardt, however, call this opinion in question.

as she proceeded on the ground of relationship, and also for the intimate friendship between our Lord and the two Apostles John and James; for although our Lord in His Divine nature was raised above all human relationship, yet this was not the case with His earthly limitations. If it is our duty to love our near relations with a peculiar love, there is nothing irreverent in ascribing the same love of relationship to Him who was the son of Mary and the cousin of John according to the flesh.

We do not know who composed the family of Zebedee and Salome. John had at least an elder brother, the Apostle James. He, like John, was on several occasions peculiarly favoured by the Lord, and the two brothers are always mentioned together. We know little of his life. Like his brother, he was of an ardent disposition, for to him also the surname Boanerges was given; and perhaps it was his impetuous disposition that induced Herod Agrippa to select him from among the Apostles as his victim, in order to ingratiate himself with the Jews (Acts xii. 1, 2).

John was also intimate in early youth with the two Apostles Andrew and Peter. They were natives of the same town of Bethsaida, and partners in fishing with the sons of Zebedee (Luke v. 10). This early acquaintance would, of course, be deepened and strengthened when all four became the Apostles and followers of Christ. There seems especially to have been a peculiar intimacy between Peter and John; they are frequently mentioned together as intimate associates and fellow-workers.

John's early youth was spent in the neighbourhood of the Sea of Galilee. As a child, he would wander along its shores, so memorable to him in after life. The scenery would help to form his character, and the society in which he mixed would leave traces of its impress. He was a Galilean by birth, and the Galileans were noted for their ardent and impetuous disposition. It was shortly before his birth that Judas of Galilee raised the standard of revolt against the Romans, declaring that God was their only King; and the Galileans were the most desperate soldiers in the great Roman war. From being a native of Galilee, John perhaps derived his impetuous temper, and had it not been for the purifying nature of his intercourse with Jesus, he might have been ranked among those restless Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices (Luke xiii. 1).

John's childhood was not destitute of beneficent influence. His mother Salome, afterwards so devoted to the Saviour, following Him when living, and not forsaking Him when dead, must have trained him in the way of the Lord, and instilled into his youthful mind the principles of piety.¹ What Eunice was to the youthful Timothy, Salome was to John. From a child he would be instructed by her in the Sacred Scriptures; he would accompany his parents, from the age of twelve, to the annual festivals at Jerusalem; he would drink in that spirit of piety which flows from the Psalms of David, and those lofty aspirations which arise from a perusal

¹ See Neander's *Planting of Christianity*, vol. i. p. 384, for a striking statement of the influence of pious mothers on their sons.

of the prophecies of Isaiah. And if there be any truth in the supposition that Salome was the sister of the Virgin, John may have come in early contact with Him who was then living in obscurity in the not distant town of Nazareth.

John would enjoy all the advantages which arose from an ordinary Jewish education. John and Peter are indeed represented by the Jewish rulers as "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts iv. 13); but all that is meant by this assertion was, that the Apostles were destitute of rabbinical learning—that they had not been trained in any of the advanced schools or colleges of the Jews. The Jews were a remarkably well-educated people. Their synagogues were their schools as well as their places of worship; and there were not only synagogues in their towns, but also in their villages. It was one of their proverbs that "a town in which there is no school must perish." The custom of the Jews was that, until the age of six, children should be instructed by their parents, and then sent to school. John, then, must have been instructed in the school of his native town, Bethsaida; a faithful idea of which would probably be obtained from a modern Jewish school in the East. Besides, we must remember that the people of Galilee were bilingual, so that John would in his early years be acquainted not only with Aramaic, but with Greek.

The youth of John was passed in a very critical period of Jewish history; a period of transition, doubt, and restlessness. Judæa had fallen under the dominion of the Romans, and the procurator Pontius Pilate

governed it with cruelty and oppression. Under Herod the Great there had been the semblance of monarchy and independence, and even his tyranny, gilded as it was with popular actions and magnificent public works, contrasted favourably with the oppression of the Roman governor. The Jews were in a restless and lawless state, and frequent outbreaks occurred, especially in the province of Galilee. The party of the Zealots was gradually forming, soon to involve the country in all the horrors of the Roman war. Nor was the religious condition of Judæa less deplorable. The purity and integrity of the priesthood were gone. The appointment to the high-priesthood was entirely in the hands of the Romans, and the office was bestowed upon their tools and partisans. The great priestly families belonged for the most part to the Sadducean faction, and were materialists and unbelievers in a future state. Caiaphas, who then occupied the office of high priest, was suspected, like Pope Leo X., of infidelity. Their opponents, the Pharisees, were for the most part hypocrites, making a great profession of religion, and belying their profession by their conduct. Religion had become petrified; its forms were observed; the morning and evening sacrifices were daily offered in the Temple; but there was no religious life—there was the mere body without the living spirit. And with this decadence of religion there was a corresponding degradation of morals. The Jews, mixing with the heathen, learned to practise their vices, and that in one of the most corrupt ages of the world; nay, according to the testimony of their own historian, they even surpassed

the heathen in wickedness and licentiousness; so that Josephus asserts there was no nation under heaven more wicked than the Jews.¹ The whole framework of society appeared about to be dissolved. Nor was this state of transition confined to Judæa; throughout the whole Roman Empire there was the same spirit of restlessness, the same corruption of morals, the same shaking and dissolving of existing institutions.

But what peculiarly distinguished this age was the prevalence of Messianic expectations. There was a general expectation throughout Judæa that just at this time a great Deliverer, whom they called the Messiah, was to arise, who would reform society, restore the worship of God, and rescue the country from oppression and wrong. The notions of the nature of this Deliverer varied with the different opinions of those who believed in His advent. Some regarded Him as a mighty conqueror, others as a Jewish philosopher, and others as an ascetic; though few, if any, rose to the idea of a suffering Messiah. This expectation arose from the Jewish prophecies, especially from the predictions of Daniel, where a fixed period appeared to be set for the advent of the Messiah (Dan. ix. 24). It is not only in the Gospels that we find traces of such an expectation (John i. 19, x. 24), but an extensive Jewish literature came into existence just before the advent of Christ, and this literature is pervaded with Messianic views. The Fourth Book of Esdras, the Book of Enoch,

¹ Probably Josephus exaggerates in order to explain the judgment of the fall of Jerusalem. It is noteworthy that our Lord does not charge the Jewish people in general with licentiousness, but rather with religious deadness.

the Assumption of Moses, the Jubilees, the Sibylline Oracles, the Psalms of Solomon, are full of Messianic allusions.¹ Nor were such expectations confined to Judæa; they were diffused throughout the East. Wheresoever the Jews went, they circulated their Messianic hopes; and reference is made to these Jewish longings by the great Roman historians Tacitus and Suetonius, who, absurdly enough, apply them to Vespasian.²

At this period of expectation and unrest, when a crisis was looked for, a preacher issued from the wilderness of Judæa of ascetic habits and of strange appearance. He came with his call to repentance, and his announcement of the approaching advent of the Messianic kingdom. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa, and saying, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 1, 2). He was the divinely-appointed forerunner of the Messiah; he himself was the subject of prophesy; his coming, like that of the Messiah, had been foretold, and was also expected (Isa. xl. 3; Mal. iii. 1). His position was unique; he stood between the Old Testament dispensation and the New; he was the last of the prophets, and the first of the evangelists; he embodied the spirit of the age, being himself in a transition state, passing from the old, but hardly entering into the new. He was

¹ For the Messianic views of the Jews before Christ, see Hausrath's *New Testament Times*, vol. i. pp. 191-264; Westcott's *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, chap. ii.; Schürer's *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ*; Drummond's *Jewish Messiah*.

² Tacitus, *Hist.* v. 13; Suetonius, *Vesp.* 4.

like a torch or finger-post pointing out the way, but remaining itself stationary; a strange phenomenon in the religious world, a disciple and yet not a disciple. Well might he call himself a voice, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

The Baptist issued from the wilderness as a preacher of repentance. Filled with a deep and overpowering sense of the wickedness of the nation, he suddenly abandoned his retirement and appeared on the banks of the Jordan, probably on the great thoroughfare between Judæa and Perea, at the fords of the Jordan, near Jericho, calling on men to repent. He was, like Luther, a great reformer in this crisis of the world's history, but there was a sternness in his manner and a severity in his rebukes which Luther did not possess. He denounced every form of wickedness and all classes of men. He was daunted neither by the rank of the great, nor by the scholarship of the learned. But "Repent ye" was not his only call; the exhortation was only with a view of preparation to the great event which was coming. He not only preached repentance, but also proclaimed the kingdom of God. He announced the coming of One whose dignity was infinitely superior to his own, the great Messiah, whom all eagerly expected, and for whose advent they must be prepared. "John answered and said, I baptize you with water; but there standeth one among you whom you know not, whose shoe latchet I am not worthy to unloose." We cannot tell what were the Baptist's Messianic views; the ascetic of the wilderness

could not share in the popular idea of a mighty conqueror; but whether he rose to the idea of a suffering Messiah, of One who was to redeem Israel and to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, we cannot possibly affirm.¹

John the Baptist gathered around him a band of disciples, chiefly generous young men, who were the flower of the nation, deeply impressed with the evils of the time, and filled with high hopes of a revival of religion by the coming of the Messiah. Among the number we are not surprised to find the Apostle John. He, being of an ardent and religious spirit, would be attracted by the fame and preaching of the Baptist; and if, as is not improbable, he was related to him as his cousin,² and perhaps cognisant of his former strange life in the wilderness, he would feel impelled to come from Galilee and to join him on the banks of the Jordan. It is almost universally admitted that John is one of the two disciples mentioned in his Gospel, where it is said, "And the next day John stood and two of his disciples" (John i. 35, 36). One of these disciples, as we are afterwards informed, was Andrew, the brother of Peter; the other is unnamed. That it was John himself is argued from the fact that he never mentions himself by name in his Gospel; and from the particularity of the description here given, being that of an eye-witness, the narrator himself must

¹ The famous phrase, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world," would lead us to suppose that the Baptist believed in a suffering Messiah.

² Elizabeth, the mother of the Baptist, being the cousin of the Virgin Mary (Luke i. 36), the sister of Salome, the mother of John.

have been present. John, then, was a disciple of the Baptist before he became a disciple of Christ. Like many eminent leaders of the Church, he passed through a preliminary stage of discipline to a higher platform.

We cannot suppose that a teaching so impressive as that of the Baptist, and a character so singular, so original, and so grand, could have been altogether without effect upon his disciples, especially on one of so receptive a nature as John. Perhaps John imbibed some of that ardour and impetuosity of temper, which procured for him the name of Boanerges, from the stern and uncompromising character and preaching of the Baptist. That denunciation of wrong, that intense hatred of sin, that intolerance of evil in every form which John possessed, were distinguishing traits in the character of the Baptist. So also the phase of mysticism which pervades John's writings and distinguishes him from all the other writers of the New Testament—that instinctive perception of truth which he displays—may have been nourished by the teaching and example of the Baptist, who spent the great part of his life in meditation and solitary musings. We must, however, recognise the contrast that there is between the character of the master and his disciple. The Baptist was legal, austere, the prophet of the past; John was spiritual, contemplative, ardent, full of love, the Apostle of the future.

It was by the Baptist that John was brought into personal contact with Jesus. A minute narrative of this crisis in his life is given by the Apostle, upon whose mind it must have made an indelible impression.

The Baptist and two of his disciples, John and Andrew, were together when Jesus drew near; and the Baptist, fully recognising Jesus as the promised Messiah,¹ directs his disciples unto Him in those ever-memorable words, "Behold the Lamb of God." And the two disciples, being thus directed, followed Jesus. "Then Jesus turned and saw them following, and saith unto them, Whom seek ye? They say unto Him, Rabbi, where dwellest Thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came, and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day; for it was the tenth hour" (John i. 35-39). And most memorable was this visit, the first interview which John had with his beloved Lord and Master. It was a new birth to him; he then came in contact with Him whom he describes as the "Word made flesh"—that great and mysterious Being whom he afterwards recognised as the incarnate God. Well might he, writing half a century afterwards, recollect the minutest particulars of an event so pregnant in its consequences, and record that it was the tenth hour when it occurred.

John, after his first interview with Jesus on the banks of the Jordan, ceased to be a disciple of the Baptist, and attached himself to the greater Master, though at first only in a general manner. He, along with the other disciples, returned with Jesus to Galilee. The next account which we have of him is his presence with Jesus at the marriage-feast at Cana (John ii. 1). That John was present is evi-

¹ The Baptist had before this baptized Jesus, and had received the Divine communication that He was the Messiah; he had seen the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and abiding upon Him (John i. 32).

dent, not only because the description is graphic and minute as that of an eye-witness, but from the fact that we are expressly informed that the disciples of Jesus were present. By these disciples of Jesus at this early period, when He had hardly entered upon His public ministry, can only be meant those five whom our Lord met on the banks of the Jordan where John the Baptist baptized, and who had attached themselves to Him, namely, John, Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael (Bartholomew?); Nathanael himself being a native of Cana (John xxi. 2). There are various suppositions and traditions as to the bridegroom. According to one tradition, entirely worthless, he was John himself, who, seeing the miracle which Jesus did, forsook his bride and followed Him.¹ On this occasion Jesus converted the water into wine. This was His first miracle—the commencement of that wonderful series of supernatural acts by which He blessed the human race and evidenced the divinity of His mission. The effect of the miracle on John and his fellow-disciples is thus stated: “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed on Him” (John ii. 11). Formerly they had been induced to follow Jesus on the representation of the Baptist; but now they themselves had seen the manifestation of His glory, and thus their faith in Him, previously excited by the words of the Baptist, was confirmed by their own experience.

Hitherto John was only in a general sense a disciple

¹ According to another tradition he was Simon the Canaanite, a tradition arising from a mistaken interpretation of the epithet *Kανανίτης* assigned to that Apostle.

of Jesus ; he had returned with Him from the Jordan to Galilee, and probably accompanied Him as a pilgrim to the Passover at Jerusalem (John ii. 12, 13). But on his return he appears to have followed his ordinary occupation as a fisherman ; he had not yet been called to forsake all and to follow Christ. But now the momentous crisis in his life—this call to the discipleship—drew near. Jesus was at Capernaum, from which Bethsaida, the usual residence of the sons of Zebedee, was about a mile distant. He was walking along the shores of the lake when he encountered two fishermen, Peter and Andrew, mending their nets. He then performed the miracle of the draught of fishes, which so overpowered Peter that he threw himself at His feet, exclaiming, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” And Jesus said unto him, “Fear not ; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.” A little farther along the shores of the lake Jesus met James and John, the sons of Zebedee, with their father, also mending their nets ; and He called them, and they immediately left the ship and their father and followed Him (Luke v. 1–11). From that time John became a constant follower of Jesus. It was no sudden impulse which induced him to do so ; he had been prepared beforehand to be a disciple of Jesus by the testimony of the Baptist, by seeing the miracles of Jesus both at Cana and Jerusalem, and by his previous converse with Him.

Shortly after this, Jesus from among His disciples selected twelve to be peculiarly trained by Him, in order after His departure to be the witnesses to His words and works, and the first preachers of His Gospel.

Among these, directly after Peter, are mentioned James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James (Mark iii. 16, 17). But John was brought into a still closer relation; among the twelve Jesus selected three—the innermost circle—the ἐκλεκτῶν ἐκλεκτότεροι—of our Lord's disciples. These were Peter, James, and John: Peter, the natural leader of the Apostles; James, the first of “the noble army of the martyrs;” and John, the contemplative Apostle. On several occasions these three were specially honoured by our Lord; they alone were permitted to behold the raising of the daughter of Jairus, the glory of their Master on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the agony in the garden. And even higher still, as the apex of the sacred pyramid of discipleship, John was selected among the three as that disciple whom Jesus chose as His peculiar friend, the sharer of His griefs and sorrows, the one among all the disciples whom Jesus specially loved. There is thus a gradation in the ascent—the discipleship, the apostleship, the privileged three, the disciple whom Jesus loved.

The peculiar temper of John, his ardent and loving nature, his zeal against everything which he conceived derogated from the glory of his Master, is seen in the record of several events in the Gospel narrative. Thus the Evangelists Mark and Luke record an incident which occurred in connection with John, when he asked our Saviour concerning the conduct of the Apostles when they forbade a certain man, who had never actually become one of His disciples, to cast out devils in His name (Mark ix. 38–41; Luke ix. 49, 50). “John

answered Him and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followed not us; and we forbade him, because he followed not us." In all probability the man who cast out devils in the name of Christ was a disciple of John the Baptist, who had been directed by the Baptist to Jesus, and had admitted his Messianic claims; but who, like the Baptist himself, had not actually attached himself to Jesus, but remained on the threshold of the kingdom of God—a disciple and yet not a disciple. This man performed miracles in the name of Jesus; he cast out devils. The Apostles of Jesus—and here John, and not Peter, appears to have taken the lead—were indignant at this assumption of what they considered the prerogative of their Master; they were jealous for His glory, and therefore they forbade the man; they ordered him to discontinue the practice of casting out devils in the name of Jesus.¹ But Jesus censures the disciples and annuls the prohibition. "Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part;" thus imparting, for all time to come, a lesson of toleration, teaching what ought to be our conduct toward those who adopt not our opinions, and belong not to our party in the Christian Church.

In the Gospel of Luke (Luke ix. 51-56) we have a remarkable incident which displays the character of John, and certainly merits for the brothers the appella-

¹ It was not John alone who forbade him, but the Apostles as a body. Perhaps John was doubtful of this action of his fellow-Apostles, and propounded it as a question to the Lord whether they were right in this prohibition.

tion of Boanerges. Jesus and His disciples were journeying to Jerusalem to attend one of the great annual festivals: instead of going round by Perea, they went by the direct route through Samaria. There was a large company, and Jesus sent messengers, probably James and John, before Him to a certain village of the Samaritans to make preparations for their reception; but the Samaritans would not receive Him. Then James and John, filled with indignation at such dishonour shown to their Master by those Samaritans, asked permission to call fire from heaven to consume them, even as Elijah did. It does not appear to have been the mere national enmity of the Samaritans to the Jews that caused them on this occasion to prevent the passage of Jesus and His disciples through their country, but because He, regarded by His followers as the Messiah, was going to observe the Passover at Jerusalem; He was giving His sanction, as Messiah, to the worship at Jerusalem, instead of to the worship on Mount Gerizim; He was siding with the Jews in the great religious controversy. And it was because this dishonour was offered to Jesus as the Messiah, this indignity was shown to the King of Israel, that the indignation of the sons of Zebedee was excited. Zeal for the glory of their Master, intense love to His person, perhaps mixed with a national feeling of hatred to the Samaritans, moved them to exclaim, "Wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elijah did?"¹ They would take upon

¹ The genuineness of the words *ὡς καὶ Ἠλίας ἐποίησεν*, omitted in the Revised Version, is doubtful; but even although spurious, it is evident that it is to the conduct of Elijah that the Apostles allude.

themselves to be the avengers of the dishonour shown to their Master. But our Lord rebuked them; they had displayed a spirit the opposite of that which He came to excite: they wished to destroy, whilst He came to save. It was a very different fire that He came to call down from heaven—the fire of divine love.

On another occasion John and his brother James displayed an ambitious disposition, though combined with a loving attachment to their Master. “Then came the mother of Zebedee’s children with her sons, worshipping Him, and asking a certain thing of Him. And He said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit the one on Thy right hand and the other on Thy left in Thy kingdom” (Matt. xx. 20, 21). The request appears to have been a conjoint petition of the mother and her two sons. It originated in the false views which the Apostles at that time entertained concerning the nature of the Messianic kingdom. John and James asked the first places in this kingdom to be nearest their Master, next in honour and dignity. On this point there must have come a vast change over John’s disposition, ending in a complete revolution of sentiment. All ambition of earthly greatness was eradicated from his mind; all selfish views were absorbed in a universal charity; and the ‘Apostle of love’ wished nothing for himself, but the pleasure of seeing the diffusion of that spirit of love over all those who professed to be the disciples of Jesus.

In the last week of our Saviour’s life—the memorable Passion week—John is frequently mentioned as

sharing in the transactions which then occurred. He and Peter were specially intrusted with making the necessary preparations for the observance of the Paschal feast (Luke xxii. 8-12). They were to go to the city, and there they would meet a man bearing a pitcher of water, and he would show them a large upper room furnished and prepared. During the Paschal week an unwonted hospitality was shown; the inhabitants of Jerusalem gave up their houses for the use of pilgrims at the feast.¹ The man who gave the use of his upper chamber to Jesus and His Apostles was doubtless a disciple of Christ. He has with some degree of probability been supposed to be Mark, who, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, had a house at Jerusalem, where the disciples were accustomed to assemble (Acts xii. 12, 13). At the Paschal supper John occupied the place of honour. Jesus and His disciples were seated, according to the Oriental fashion, reclining or leaning on couches. John was next to Jesus, and leant upon His breast. Hence he is known in the writings of the Fathers by the title *ὁ ἐπιστήθιος*.

Tradition relates that John was that young man who followed Jesus at Gethsemane, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body (Mark xiv. 50, 51). Thus Chrysostom and Ambrose say that this young man was John. Jerome, on the other hand, thinks that he was James the brother of John. All such suppositions are plainly erroneous. John was with Christ in the garden,

¹ On the preparation for the Passover see Lightfoot's *Works*, vol. xi. p. 328, edition by Pitman; Geikie's *Life of Christ*, vol. ii. pp. 462-464; Trench's *Life and Character of St. John*, pp. 84 ff.; Edersheim's *Life and Times of Jesus*, vol. ii. p. 486 ff.

and had risen with Him from table. "How some persons," observes Calvin, "have come to dream that it was John, I know not; nor is it of any importance to inquire."¹

John, like all the other disciples, fled on the arrest of his Master at Gethsemane; but he appears soon to have recovered from his panic, for the next account which we have of him is standing at the cross of Jesus. We read that "Jesus saw His mother and the disciple standing by whom He loved" (John xix. 26, 27). John was there alone of all the Apostles. The other Apostles had fled to their houses. Peter indeed had stopped in his flight, and followed Jesus, but he was overcome by temptation, and had thrice denied his Lord, and now he was in solitude and in tears. John was the only representative of "the glorious company of the Apostles" who ventured to Calvary. And there was along with John, standing beside him, in most intimate relation to him, as if he were her protector, Mary, the mother of Jesus. She also had come up with the other Galileans to the feast; her holy love drew her to her blessed Son; and the two persons who were dearest to the Saviour's heart—His mother and that disciple whom He loved—stood by His cross.

Our Lord with His dying lips consigned His mother to the care of His beloved disciple. John was His dearest friend; he was standing with His mother at the cross; in all probability he was the nephew of Mary, the son of her sister Salome; and he possessed a house in Jerusalem; and therefore Jesus consigns

¹ Calvin, *in loco*.

Mary to his care. "When Jesus therefore saw His mother and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son ! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother. And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home" (John xix. 26, 27).

On the death of their Master the hopes of the disciples were almost extinguished. Their expectations of the Messianic kingdom were disappointed ; the ignominious death of their Master had obliterated from their minds all His intimations of His resurrection, and they gave utterance to their sorrowful feelings in the words, "We trusted that this had been He who should have redeemed Israel." In this state of grief and despair, John and Peter are startled by the news brought to them by Mary Magdalene early on Sunday morning that she had found the sepulchre empty ; the grave was open, but the body of Jesus was not there. Peter and John run to the sepulchre ; John, being the younger, outstrips Peter and arrives first. He looks in, and finds the sepulchre empty, but a certain feeling of awe and reverence kept him from entering. Peter, however, eager and impulsive, is detained by no consideration ; he enters into the sepulchre, and is afterwards followed by John. They find not only the sepulchre empty, but the grave-clothes carefully folded, and the napkin that was about His head folded and lying in a separate place (Luke xxiv. 10-12 ; John xx. 2-10). There were no signs of haste, no evidence that the body had been hurriedly taken away either by friend or foe ; all denoted calmness and leisure, as if

one had calmly risen from his bed. Then it must have flashed upon the disciples that their Master had risen from the dead; then would those mysterious intimations of His rising again, which He made to them in His lifetime, but which they did not understand, be recalled; then John especially "saw and believed" (John xx. 8). What John believed was not merely that the sepulchre was empty, and that the body of Jesus was absent—that was evident; nor was it the assertion of Mary that some one had taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, for the folded garments refuted that idea; but it was that Jesus Himself had actually risen from the dead—that the sepulchre was empty because He had risen and left it.

Still, however, Jesus had not yet appeared to John; he believed that He had risen, but he himself had not seen Him. But this visible manifestation was soon to be made. On the very day of the Resurrection, John and His fellow-Apostles were assembled in an upper chamber, probably the same upper room where, three days before, they had partaken of the last Passover with their Master. They had met to consider the various reports of the resurrection of their Lord which were circulated among the disciples, when their doubts were dispelled by the sudden appearance of the risen Saviour Himself. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord" (Luke xxiv. 36-40; John xx. 19-23).

John gives, in the appendix to his Gospel,¹ an account of a special manifestation to himself and six

¹ The question regarding the Appendix to the Gospel will be discussed in a later portion of this book.

other disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and of a remarkable conversation which followed it (John xxi.). The Apostles, at the close of the seven days of the feast of the Passover, had left Jerusalem and returned to Galilee. This they did at the express command of their Lord. He had promised to appear to them in Galilee (Matt. xxvi. 32, xxviii. 7, 10). Probably several days had elapsed before the fulfilment of His promise. The Apostles had betaken themselves to their usual occupation of fishing. Seven of them¹ were fishing, as is not unusual, in the night, but without success. As morning began to dawn, and it was still dark, the figure of One was dimly discerned on the shore. He asked them if they had been successful in their fishing; and when He received a negative reply, He told them to cast their net on the other side of the ship; and when they did so, they enclosed a vast multitude of fish. The recollection of the former miraculous draught of fishes suggested to John's mind that the unknown and scarcely visible Person on the shore was the Lord. He communicates his thoughts to Peter; and Peter, with his usual impetuosity, threw off his fisherman's coat, cast himself into the sea, and swam ashore. The usual characteristics of the two Apostles are here seen; John apprehends the truth and Peter adopts it; Peter takes the lead and John follows; John is first in intuition, Peter is first in action.

It was on this occasion that the memorable conver-

¹ The seven disciples mentioned as the witnesses of this manifestation are Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee (Bartholomew?), the sons of Zebedee, James and John, and two other disciples, whose names are not given, probably because they were not of the number of the Apostles.

sation between our Lord and Peter and John occurred (John xxi. 15-23). Peter is solemnly restored to his apostolic office, and receives from his Master a command to follow: "And Jesus said to him, Follow me." Peter obeys; and as he once followed Christ at a distance, now he follows Him close at hand. John, unbidden, also follows Christ and Peter. Peter, turning round, sees John following, and he saith to Jesus, "Lord, what shall this man do?" The question is put partly from curiosity, and partly from affection; perhaps, also, there may have been in it a shade of jealousy. Jesus gives no definite answer; His words savour of rebuke: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." Obey My command, and do not perplex thyself about the fate of others, or inquire into their destiny. There have been various opinions concerning the precise meaning of our Lord's words. Some suppose that they refer to His coming at death, and that whereas He had predicted a violent death to Peter, He now foretold a natural death to John.¹ Others refer them to the coming of the Lord at the destruction of Jerusalem, when an end would be put to the Jewish dispensation, and the kingdom of Christ would be fully established.² And others refer them to the second advent, when Christ shall appear in glory for the redemption of His people. Even although he should remain on earth until I come again, what is that to thee?³ This gave rise to

¹ The view adopted by Augustine, Grotius, Olshausen, Ewald, Lange.

² The opinion of Bengel, Stier, Luthardt, Alford, Trench, Westcott.

³ The view adopted by Meyer in his commentary. This, we conceive, is the correct interpretation.

the plausible notion or legend that John should never die—that he should abide until the coming of the Lord ; a notion which he himself tells us was prevalent among the brethren, and which he writes to correct. Jesus, he observes, did not say precisely, “He shall not die,” or “He shall remain until My coming ;” but hypothetically, “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee ?”

After the Ascension John finally retired from Galilee ; he had given up his occupation of fishing, and now devoted himself entirely to the diffusion of the Gospel ; nor do we hear that he ever revisited the scene of his youth. His stated residence was now in Jerusalem, where in all probability he had a house of his own, and where he dwelt with Mary, the mother of Jesus, who had been consigned to his care, and with his own mother, Salome.

In the Acts of the Apostles, John steps into the background before the more energetic Apostles Peter and Paul. After the Ascension, he along with the other disciples, waited in the upper room in prayer and supplication for the outpouring of the Spirit (Acts i. 13, 14). He doubtless, with the other Apostles, took part in the preaching of the Gospel on the day of Pentecost. In the Acts of the Apostles he is generally mentioned in company with Peter. There seems to have been a sacred friendship between these two Apostles. They were sent together by Christ to make preparations for the last Passover. They appear to have sat at the right and left hand of Jesus at the Last Supper, when Peter beckoned to John to inquire who

it was of whom He spake when He said that one of them should betray Him. They were perhaps both present in the hall of Caiaphas. They ran together to the sepulchre. They both followed Christ after His manifestation at the Sea of Tiberias. They are represented as entering in company into the Temple gate at the hour of prayer. They are sent forth together by the Church to confirm the converts in Samaria. "Everywhere," says St. Chrysostom, "we find these two Apostles in great harmony together."¹ And this friendship, commenced, as we have seen, in youth, was increased and confirmed in manhood; their common experiences deepened their mutual affection. And yet the temperament of these two Apostles, as we have also seen, was very different. So also the love wherewith they loved Christ was different. Each was equally devoted to the Master, but they showed their devotion in different ways. Peter's ardour induced him to draw a sword in His defence; John followed Him with an unfaltering devotion even to the cross. Peter was foremost in the professions of his attachment; John was reticent in profession, but not less ardent in devotion. Peter's love was the devoted love of a soldier to his leader, ready to sacrifice his life for his sake; whereas the love of John was that which surpasseth the love of women, never faltering and ever confiding.²

There are only two events recorded in the Acts in which John is represented as taking an active part. The one is the cure of the lame man at the Temple gate

¹ Chrysostom's *Homilies on the Acts*, Hom. viii.

² Howson' *Horæ Petrinæ*, pp. 54, 55.

(Acts iii.). Peter and John went together into the Temple at the hour of prayer. The disciples had not as yet withdrawn from the worship of the Jews; they still observed the stated hours of prayer; they still attended the services of the Temple. Proceeding from the outer to the inner court, they came to the Beautiful gate of the Temple. Here, as was not unusual, at the gates of the Temple, a lame man was laid for the purpose of asking alms of those who might enter.¹ Peter and John regarded him with compassion; and Peter, actuated by a Divine impulse, addressed him: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle-bones received strength, and he stood up and walked, and entered with them into the inner court of the Temple, walking and leaping and praising God. The miracle acted as a bell to call the people to worship, and the multitude ran together to Solomon's porch. Then Peter addressed them with irresistible force, telling them that Jesus, whom they had denied and crucified, was risen from the dead, and exalted as a Prince and a Saviour, and urging them to repent and become His disciples.

The Jewish authorities felt constrained to interfere; they were implicated in the death of Jesus; the Apostles had, indirectly at least, accused them of being the betrayers and murderers of their Messiah, and the people were wavering in their views. Accordingly the chief priests arrest Peter and John and put them in

¹ Chrysostom recommends the practice as regards Christian churches.

prison until the next day, because it was then evening.¹ Next day the two Apostles are brought before the Sanhedrim, and asked by what authority or by what name they had performed this miracle. Then Peter boldly accuses them of being the murderers of their Messiah. The chief priests found themselves in a dilemma; the man who was cured was standing in the court, and they could neither deny the miracle nor punish the Apostles for performing what was undoubtedly a good action. Besides, the multitude at this time favoured the Apostles, so that they were constrained to dismiss them unpunished, with the admonition not to speak nor to teach in the name of Jesus; an admonition which the Apostles declared their determination to disobey.

The other event is the preaching of the Gospel in Samaria (Acts viii. 14-25). Several years had elapsed since the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and the Christian Church steadily increased in numbers. John, with the rest of the Apostles, still continued in Jerusalem, or occasionally preached the Gospel in neighbouring cities. At last Christianity came into direct collision with Judaism. Stephen, a Hellenistic Christian, appears to have attacked the exclusive nature of Judaism, and to have dwelt upon the inevitable destruction of the Temple and the revolution which must come over the Jewish religion.² In

¹ The reason of this arrest is stated, because the rulers were grieved that the Apostles taught through Jesus the resurrection of the dead. Consequently the chief persons who were concerned in the arrest of these two Apostles were the Sadducees.

² Hitherto Christianity was chiefly opposed by the Sadducees, but it now displayed its anti-Pharisaical side.

consequence of this, the tide of popular favour turned ; Jewish fanaticism was roused ; Stephen was murdered in a popular tumult ; and the disciples, with the exception of the Apostles, who appear to have been providentially protected, were dispersed. But this dispersion only served for the diffusion of the Gospel ; Christianity, though still restricted to the Jews, was no longer confined to Jerusalem ; the dispersed went throughout Samaria, Galilee, and Perea preaching the Gospel. Philip, one of the deacons, was especially successful in Samaria. Here a decided step in advance was taken ; the Samaritans, although recognised as having embraced the Jewish religion, were regarded as only half Jews, and now to them the Gospel was preached, and multitudes of them believed on Jesus. The matter was regarded of such importance, that the Church of Jerusalem resolved to send its two most distinguished members, Peter and John, to visit them. The purpose of the mission was to confirm the Samaritans in the faith, to impart to them true views of the Gospel, and especially to confer on them by the imposition of hands the miraculous endowments of the Holy Ghost. Peter and John preached the Word of God throughout the cities and villages of Samaria, and thus advanced the work commenced by Philip.

John, as we learn from an incidental notice in one of Paul's Epistles, was present at the celebrated Council of Jerusalem. More than eighteen years had elapsed since the Ascension, and Christianity had during this period burst its Jewish bands and penetrated to the

Gentiles. The new Apostle, Paul, had with untiring zeal and earnestness preached the Gospel in the various provinces of Proconsular Asia, and had formed numerous Churches, consisting chiefly of Gentile converts. This accession of the Gentiles to the Christian Church was a source of danger and discord. The Jews were restricted by their religion; they were forbidden to have any social dealings with the Gentiles; their ceremonial observances prohibited the possibility of eating with them. Were then these Jewish distinctions to be done away with? Above all, was circumcision to be declared unnecessary in a proselyte? Was the wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles to be broken down? Or were the restrictions to be adopted by the Gentile converts, so that by becoming Christians they must also become Jews?

The question was referred to the Church of Jerusalem. The crisis was a most important one; it depended upon the decision of that Council whether the progress of Christianity should be arrested, and Christians continue a Jewish sect; or whether, being delivered from the trammels of Judaism, it should aspire to be the religion of the world. John was present at the Council, and took a prominent part in its decisions. Although his name is not mentioned in the Acts, and it would appear that the controversy was decided by the declared opinions of Peter and James, the Lord's brother, yet we learn from the Epistle to the Galatians that John was equally influential (Gal. ii. 9). The decision of the Council was entirely in favour of the Gentile Christians; the law of Moses was not binding on

them ; there was no obligation on them to be circumcised and to adopt the Jewish as well as the Christian religion. This is the great charter of Christian rights and privileges.

Paul mentions James and Cephas and John as those who were reputed to be "pillars of the Church." Hence these three have been called "the pillar Apostles." This appellation, conferred on John along with the other two Apostles, intimates his importance in the Christian Church. He was recognised in the early Church as one of its most prominent leaders ; and although he did not perhaps take such an active part as Peter, nor was so venerated by the Jewish Christians as James, the Lord's brother, yet "the disciple whom Jesus loved," the guardian and protector of Mary, the mother of the Lord, must ever have been regarded with peculiar veneration, and must ever have exercised a most wholesome influence in the early Church. His labours in the diffusion of the Gospel are not recorded. Perhaps on account of his retiring and contemplative character, they were not so extensive as those either of Peter or Paul ; but in all ages he will be regarded as one of the brightest ornaments and supports, a veritable pillar of the Christian Church.

II. ST. JOHN'S LATER DAYS.

The presence of John at the Council of Jerusalem (A.D. 51), incidentally referred to by Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. ii. 9), is the last direct notice of him in Scripture. We are left very much to the un-

certainly of tradition regarding his subsequent life. There are, however, two facts which we may reasonably infer from the Apocalypse, assuming that this book was written by the Apostle, namely, his intimate connection with the Churches in Proconsular Asia and his residence in Patmos, where the visions contained in that book were communicated to him. And, in correspondence with these two facts, there is in the writings of the early Fathers, from Irenæus downwards, a uniform testimony regarding two incidents in the later life of John, which have been accepted as historical by the generality of theologians, namely, his lengthened residence and death at Ephesus, and his temporary abode in Patmos.

It is uncertain when John finally quitted Jerusalem. He is not mentioned in the account of Paul's last visit to that city; we are only informed that that Apostle was received by James, the Lord's brother, and by the presbyters (Acts xxi. 18); but we are not at liberty to infer from this that John had already left Jerusalem, for, on the one hand, the omission of his name may have been accidental, just as there is no mention of him in the Acts of the Apostles in the account of the Council of Jerusalem, although we know from other information that he was present (Gal. ii. 9); and, on the other hand, if absent on the occasion of Paul's last visit, this may have been only a temporary absence, as was the case on the occasion of Paul's first visit, when he saw none of the Apostles save Peter and James, the Lord's brother (Gal. i. 18, 19). Godet supposes that after our Lord's ascension John's permanent residence

was in Galilee, where he abode with Mary, our Lord's mother, and that he only occasionally went up to Jerusalem; and that this circumstance serves to explain why in those first times he took so small a share in missionary work.¹ But for this opinion there does not appear to be the slightest foundation; the fact that he was sent by the Church along with Peter to Samaria naturally suggests that his stated residence was in Jerusalem. The most probable view is that John did not leave Jerusalem until he was constrained to do so at the commencement of the Jewish war, in obedience to our Lord's commands. Christ had enjoined His disciples, when they saw Jerusalem encompassed with armies, to leave the city, as being doomed to destruction (Luke xxi. 20, 21; Matt. xxiv. 15, 16). And Josephus informs us that after the defeat of Cestius Gallus, the Proconsul of Syria, "many of the most eminent Jews swam away from the city as from a ship when it was going to sink."²

We learn from Eusebius that the Jewish Christians at the commencement of the war (A.D. 66) fled from Jerusalem in obedience to our Lord's command (Luke xxi. 21), and betook themselves to Pella,³ a city in Perea, about sixty miles distant. "The whole body of the Church at Jerusalem," he observes, "having been commanded by Divine revelation given to men of approved piety there before the war, removed from that city and dwelt in a certain town beyond Jordan

¹ Gode's *Commentary on St. John's Gospel*, vol. i. pp. 41, 42, translation.

² *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 20.

³ Pella was one of the towns of Decapolis. According to Thomson, *Land and the Book*, p. 456, its modern name is Tubukat Fahel.

called Pella.”¹ Accordingly many suppose that John accompanied the Christians to Pella, and there assisted in the organisation of the Church under Symeon, the son of Cleophas, supposed to be a cousin of our Lord, who succeeded James as Bishop of Jerusalem, and who, according to Eusebius, suffered martyrdom in the reign of Trajan.² “Pella,” observes Lange, “formed the natural bridge for the Apostle from Jerusalem to Ephesus, and probably he did not leave the community at Pella to pass to Asia Minor until it was firmly established.”³ There is nothing improbable in this opinion, for if John remained in Jerusalem until the commencement of the war, he would naturally accompany his fellow-Christians to Pella. But Pella must have been only a stage on his journey from Jerusalem to Ephesus, and it must have been shortly after, that he took up his residence in the latter city.

Another tradition or supposition is that John journeyed eastward beyond the Roman Empire into Parthia, and there preached the Gospel. His First Epistle was known to St. Augustine⁴ and several of the Fathers⁵ as the “Epistle of John to the Parthians;” and, on the assumption of the correctness of this title, it has been inferred that Parthia was the country to which John first betook himself when he

¹ *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 5.

² Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 32.

³ Lange’s *Bibelwerk: Das Evangelium Johannes*, p. 7; American translation, p. 10. See also Archdeacon Lee in *Speaker’s Commentary* on the Revelation, vol. iv. p. 427; Ewald’s *History of Israel*, vol. viii. p. 157.

⁴ *Quæst. Evang.*, ii. 39, where we read: “Secundum sententiam hanc etiam illud est quod dictum est a Joanne in epistola ad Parthos.”

⁵ So called by Vigilius Thapsensis, Cassiodorus, Bede, &c.

quitted Jerusalem. If so, we again behold him in company with Peter; for it is evident from the First Epistle of that Apostle, written from Babylon (1 Pet. v. 13),¹ that Parthia, in which empire Babylon was situated, was the sphere of his apostolic labours. The Jews were exceedingly numerous in this quarter ever since their deportation under Nebuchadnezzar;² only a small number had returned to Palestine; the great majority had permanently settled in Babylon and other cities of Mesopotamia;³ and therefore it is argued that there is nothing improbable in the supposition that Peter and John, two of the Apostles of the circumcision, who are always found together, went to preach the Gospel to the Jews in Babylon. But this supposition has its origin in a mistake. The title given to John's First Epistle, as "The Epistle of John to the Parthians," is founded on error,⁴ and is rejected by all Biblical critics. The error probably arose from the title *παρθένος*, "the virgin," given to St. John, which was mistaken for the Parthians. "The Latins," observes Gieseler, "misunderstanding it, made out of it *Epistolam ad Parthos*." There is no mention in ecclesiastical history of John's mission to the Parthians, and no ground for the above opinion.

¹ Provided the city of Babylon be here meant, and the word be not a mere designation, as many suppose, for Rome.

² Merivale's *History of the Romans under the Empire*, vol. iii. p. 389; Milman's *History of the Jews*, vol. ii. p. 152.

³ As showing how soon the captive Jews became at home in Chaldæa, F. Delitzsch says that among the cuneiform tablets from excavations recently made in the Euphrates Valley are the voluminous books of a Jewish trading firm, which carried on an extensive business before the fall of the Babylonish Empire.

⁴ See Gloag's *Catholic Epistles*, pp. 274, 275.

The uniform testimony of the Fathers points to Ephesus as the residence of John during his later years. That John resided for some time in Proconsular Asia is implied in the Apocalypse. This writing is addressed to the seven Churches which are in Asia, thus implying that John had some peculiar interest in these Asiatic Churches, which is accounted for by assuming his residence in Ephesus. Accordingly, we have the uniform testimony of the Fathers from Irenæus downwards to this fact. Irenæus (A.D. 180) is an important witness, as he was only removed one stage from John; he was a disciple of Polycarp, and Polycarp was a disciple of John. In his Epistle to Florinus, his fellow-student under Polycarp, Irenæus speaks of his intimacy, while yet a boy, in Proconsular Asia with Polycarp, and of Polycarp's reminiscences of his familiar intercourse with John: "I saw thee, while I was yet a boy in Proconsular Asia, with Polycarp. I can tell the very place where the blessed Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse, and what he used to relate regarding his intimacy with John, and also with others who had seen the Lord."¹ And in his letter to Victor of Rome on the Paschal controversy he writes: "When the blessed Polycarp visited Rome in the time of Anicetus, they had slight differences among themselves, but were soon reconciled. For Anicetus could not persuade Polycarp not to observe it (the 14th Nisan as Easter), because he had always observed it with John, the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the Apostles

✓ ¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 20. Polycarp was martyred in extreme old age, having served Christ eighty-six years, in the reign of Antoninus Pius, A.D. 156, and was probably twenty-eight years old at the death of John.

with whom he associated.”¹ On several other occasions Irenæus vouches for the residence of John in Ephesus. “The Church of Ephesus,” he observes, “founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently until the time of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the Apostles.”² And again: “John, the disciple of the Lord, who leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.”³ And he mentions the encounter of the Apostle with the heresiarch Cerinthus as occurring at Ephesus.⁴ Apollonius (A.D. 180) relates that a dead man was raised through the Divine power by John at Ephesus.⁵ Polycrates (A.D. 190), who was himself Bishop of Ephesus toward the close of the second century, informs us that John was buried in that city. “Moreover, John, who rested upon the bosom of our Lord, who also wore the sacerdotal plate (πέταλον), both a witness and a teacher, was buried in Ephesus.”⁶ Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 190), who lived about the same time, testifies to the same fact. “After the tyrant was dead, John, coming from the island of Patmos to Ephesus, went also when called to the neighbouring regions of the Gentiles, in some to appoint Bishops, in some to institute entire new Churches, in others to

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 24.

² *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 3, 4; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 23.

³ *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 1, 1; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 8.

✓ ⁴ *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 3, 4; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iv. 14. A complete collection of the passages from Irenæus bearing on this subject has been made by Scholten, *Der Apostel Johannes*, pp. 89 ff. They are thirteen in number. In them Irenæus mentions as his authorities: (1) Presbyters of Asia Minor who had seen John; (2) The Ephesian Church; (3) Papias; (4) Friends of Polycarp; (5) Polycarp himself.

⁵ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 18.

⁶ *Idem*, v. 24.

appoint to the ministry those that were set apart by the Holy Ghost.”¹ And Origen (A.D. 230) states that John received Proconsular Asia as his allotted region, where after continuing for some time, he died at Ephesus.²

Notwithstanding this early, uniform, and constant tradition, extending from Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of John, the residence of John at Ephesus has been called in question by certain critics of the extreme negative school. The first who intelligently questioned the fact was Lützelberger, and he has been followed by Keim, Holtzmann, Schenkel, and Scholten. On the other hand, many of the most distinguished theologians belonging to the Tübingen school and the later negative school, inasmuch as they assert the authenticity of the Apocalypse, as Hilgenfeld, Krenkel, and Mangold, maintain the Ephesian residence of John.³ The reason why this fact so well attested is opposed, as Lützelberger admits, seems to be, that if it is granted that John resided in Ephesus, then this would be a strong argument in favour of the genuineness of his Gospel, because it would be impossible that a spurious book in his name would pass current in the early part of the second century in Asia, where many would be still living who would have known and conversed with John, and who could not possibly have been imposed on.⁴ Deny the Ephesian

¹ Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 23.

² *Idem*, iii. 1. For the later history of the tradition, see Scholten, *Apostel Johannes*, pp. 83 ff.

³ See the literature connected with John's later days given in p. 1.

⁴ See Luthardt, *St. John the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 115.

residence, and a strong proof in favour of John's authorship of the Fourth Gospel would be removed.

The chief objector in recent times is Keim.¹ He considers John's residence in Proconsular Asia as a late tradition, having no ground in fact, and being highly improbable in itself. "Up to the end of the second century," he observes, "we seek in vain for the Apostle John in Asia Minor. The New Testament, even its latest portions—and we would particularly mention the Acts of the Apostles, which was written long after the destruction of Jerusalem—is wholly silent upon this point. Long after the middle of the second century, the same silence is found in the Epistles of Ignatius; not merely in the Epistle to Smyrna, but also in those to Polycarp and Ephesus. The same silence reigns in Polycarp's Epistle to the Philippians and the Smyranean history of his martyrdom under Marcus Aurelius. All these works are silent as to an Apostle John in Asia Minor, and the latter works even as to an Apostle John at all—the Apostle that afterwards became the dearest possession of the Christian Church, which, up to the year 170, cared to mention or to hear no name but that of Paul."²

But it is precarious to attempt to disprove a generally asserted historical fact by the *argumentum e silentio*;³ in this case it can only be valid provided it can

¹ The arguments which Keim uses are in the main those of Lützelberger, only, as Luthardt says, not so well arranged.

² Keim's *Jesus of Nazara*, vol. i. p. 218, translation.

³ Krenkel quotes a remark of a correspondent of A. von Humboldt, which is interesting in this connection: "Humboldt confirms a statement which we have often made, that we must not infer too much from the silence of authors. In the archives of Barcelona there is no mention of Columbus's triumphal

be shown that it was essential that John should be mentioned. It is strange to emphasise the Acts of the Apostles as an example of silence concerning John's Ephesian residence, as that book closes with Paul's imprisonment, an event which occurred before the date assigned to that residence.¹ All the books of the New Testament were probably written before this period, with the exception of John's own writings, and in the Apocalypse his residence in Proconsular Asia is implied. In the Epistles of Ignatius, admitting the genuineness of the smaller recension, there was no necessity to mention John. Ignatius was not one of his disciples, and he only mentions Paul because there was a resemblance between that Apostle's fate and his own, both being led prisoners to Rome as confessors of Christ.² Nor was there any necessity for Polycarp to state that he was a disciple of John at Ephesus; he was not writing to the Ephesians, but to the Philippians, a Church founded by Paul, and which, so far as we know, had no connection with John. A similar remark is also applicable to the Smyranean account of the martyrdom of Polycarp.³ The statements of Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, as to the residence of John in Ephesus, are

entry into that city; in Marco Polo there is no mention of the Chinese Wall; and in the archives of Portugal there is nothing about the voyages of Amerigo Vespucci in the service of the crown."—*Apostel Johannes*, p. 139, note.

¹ On this Godet remarks: "The Acts of the Apostles, says Keim, do not speak of such a sojourn by John in Asia. Is the man serious who speaks thus? With such logic, replies Leuschner, it could also be proved that Paul is not yet dead to this hour."—*Commentary on John's Gospel*, vol. i. p. 49.

² *Ad Eph.*, chap. xii.

³ We do not advert to the statements of Papias, as his words are very ambiguous, and different interpretations have been given of them.

to us perfectly decisive. Keim can only endeavour to invalidate them by assuming that Irenæus in his Epistle to Florinus mistook John the Presbyter for John the Apostle,¹ an assumption which is wholly unwarranted, and is the very extravagance of destructive criticism. It must also be assumed that in his Epistle to Victor of Rome, Irenæus made a similar mistake. Scholten admits that if the Epistle to Florinus is genuine, the acquaintance of Polycarp with John is established, and therefore he is driven to deny the authenticity of that Epistle. In this "desperate hypothesis," as Hilgenfeld calls it, he has not been followed by others.²

John could only have come to Ephesus at a late period. It is probable that he had not arrived before the death of Paul (A.D. 66?); for in Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy, written immediately before his martyrdom, and sent to Ephesus, there is no allusion to John's presence in that city. And if, as we have seen was most probable, John remained in Jerusalem until the commencement of the Jewish war, he could only have repaired to Ephesus, at the earliest, in the year A.D. 66 or A.D. 67.

Ephesus³ appears at this time to have been the great centre of Christian light. The Church of Jerusalem, the centre of Jewish Christianity, had been forcibly broken up on the occasion of the Jewish war. The Church of Antioch, the former capital of Gentile Chris-

¹ Keim's *Jesus of Nazara*, vol. i. pp. 220-222.

² For a close examination of Keim's *argumentum e silentio*, see Luthardt, *John the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 121 ff.

³ Ephesus is now called Ayasalouk, a corruption of ἅγιος θεόλογος, the name by which St. John was known. For an admirable description of Ephesus see Lewin's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. i. p. 355 ff.

tianity, had now yielded its precedence to the Church of Ephesus. Timothy, the favourite disciple of Paul, had taken up his residence there at Paul's request, until called by that Apostle to Rome; and now his place was more than supplied by the Apostle John. "Henceforth," observes so cautious a writer as Bishop Lightfoot, "we find the headquarters of Christendom no more at Jerusalem, nor even at Antioch, but, for the time at least, at Ephesus. Here John fixed his abode after his temporary banishment in Patmos. Here also—if an ancient tradition may be credited—lived Andrew, the friend of John's youth, a native like himself of Bethsaida, and a fellow-disciple with him of John the Baptist. In the same neighbourhood also resided a third fisherman-Apostle of Bethsaida, Philip, who died and was buried at Hierapolis in Phrygia. Besides these three Apostles, we read also of two other personal disciples of Christ in these parts, Aristion and a second John, with whom Papias had conversed respecting the human life of the Saviour and the earliest days of the Church."¹ Ephesus was peculiarly suitable for the diffusion of the Gospel. It was situated in a very populous country, and was intimately connected with many flourishing cities. Here the courts of Proconsular Asia were held; here the Roman Proconsul had his official residence; and hence to it the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns resorted. It was in the centre of the country, midway between Smyrna and Miletus. Hence, then, Ephesus was not only the poli-

¹ Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. i. p. 422. See also his *Commentary on the Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon*, p. 45. *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 91.

tical, but became also the ecclesiastical metropolis of Asia. Besides, John's presence at Ephesus was particularly necessary on account of the rise of Gnosticism. This form of error, a species of eclecticism, a mixture of heathen philosophy and Christianity, had disturbed the Church. It appears to have originated in Asia, the home of the blending of Oriental and Greek philosophy, and had its stronghold in Ephesus. Here Cerinthus, one of the early heresiarchs, had his residence. Here the Antinomian tenets of the Nicolaitanes were widely disseminated (Rev. ii. 6). Christianity was in imminent danger of being corrupted through "philosophy and vain deceit." Now, as we learn from his First Epistle, John opposed Gnosticism with all the force of Apostolic authority. He testified especially against that form of it called Docetism, which taught that Christ did not come in the flesh; and his authority was necessary to preserve the purity of the Church. Asia, the seat of heresy, required the presence of John, the champion of the truth.

John during his residence at Ephesus appears to have exercised an apostolic authority over the Churches of Asia. He visited them, regulated their government, corrected errors, ordained ministers, and confirmed believers in the faith. Thus, in a passage formerly quoted, Clemens Alexandrinus informs us that John went to the neighbouring regions of the Gentiles to extend and strengthen the Church.¹ He also, as we learn from his Third Epistle, sent forth evangelists with letters of recommendation to preach the

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 23.

Gospel in the different cities of Asia (3 John 5-8), and thus acted to all intents and purposes as a metropolitan bishop. Polycrates informs us that he was a priest, and wore the sacerdotal plate.¹ This can only be understood metaphorically, to indicate the high esteem in which John was held by the Christian Church at Ephesus, as if he held a position and an authority there similar to that of the high priest among the Jews. The Apocalypse is addressed to the seven Churches which are in Asia, to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, showing that John had an intimate connection with these Churches, and exercised an active superintendence over them. Indeed, some² think that John was the author of that ecclesiastical constitution of bishops and presbyters which prevailed in Asia Minor in the second century, of which the angels of the Churches mentioned in the Apocalypse are supposed to be the first faint traces, and which a little later is more fully stated in the Epistles of Ignatius;³ so that, according to them, Episcopacy had its origin in the enactments of the Apostle John. This is a mere ingenious hypothesis, and cannot be stated as an authentic fact; though undoubtedly John himself exercised episcopal authority in Asia. He was, however, not a bishop, properly so called, but one of the twelve Apostles of our Lord.

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 24.

² So Rothe, Thiersch, Neander. See also Lightfoot, *Dissertation on the Christian Ministry*, in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*, pp. 179-267.

³ The Episcopacy in the Epistles of Ignatius, however, was not diocesan but congregational Episcopacy.

The other fact inferred from the Apocalypse is John's residence or temporary abode in the island of Patmos. "I was in the island called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev. i. 9).

We have numerous references to John's banishment to Patmos in the writings of the Fathers. Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 190) speaks of John's return from Patmos to Ephesus after the death of the tyrant.¹ Tertullian (A.D. 200) states that John's banishment to Patmos was preceded by the legendary miracle of his deliverance after being immersed in a caldron of boiling oil, which, according to him, occurred at Rome.² Origen (A.D. 230) says, "A Roman emperor, as tradition teaches, banished John into the island of Patmos for the testimony which he bore to the word of truth; and John himself bears witness to his banishment."³ Victorinus (A.D. 290), Bishop of Pettau, in his Commentary on the Apocalypse, observes: "John said these things when he was on the island of Patmos, condemned to the labours of the mines by the Emperor Domitian."⁴ Eusebius (A.D. 320) frequently refers to John's banishment. "About this time," he observes, "the beloved disciple of Jesus, John, the Apostle and Evangelist, still surviving, governed the Churches in Asia after his return from exile on the island, and after the death of Domitian."⁵ And again: "In this persecution," namely, that of Domitian, "it is handed down

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 23.

² Tertullian, *De Præscript. Hær.*, chap. xxxvi.

³ Origen, *Comment. in Matt.* xvi. 6.

⁴ Victorinus, *Comment. in Rev.* x. 11.

⁵ *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 23.

by tradition that the Apostle and Evangelist John, in consequence of his testimony to the Divine Word, was condemned to dwell in the island of Patmos.”¹ Epiphanius (A.D. 374) calls the emperor Claudius: “John prophesied in the isle of Patmos in the reign of Claudius;” and in another place, “John wrote his Gospel in his old age, when he was about ninety years of age, after his return from Patmos, which was in the reign of Claudius Cæsar.”² Jerome (A.D. 390), in his book of “*Illustrious Men*,” says: “Domitian, in the fourteenth year of his reign, raising the second persecution after Nero, John was banished into the island of Patmos, where he wrote the Apocalypse.”³ And in another work: “John was a prophet, as he saw the Revelation in the island of Patmos, where he was banished by Domitian.”

John’s banishment to Patmos is not so well authenticated by the testimonies of the Fathers as his residence at Ephesus. We want here the important testimony of Irenæus.⁴ The first who alludes to it is Clemens Alexandrinus, towards the close of the second century. Besides, the testimonies of the Fathers which are extant appear to have taken their rise from the statement in the Apocalypse.⁵ But assuming John’s authorship of the Apocalypse, his banishment to Patmos, or at least his temporary residence there, must be regarded as a historical fact; nor has it been so much contested by

¹ *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 18.

² Epiphanius, *Hær.*, 12.

³ *De Vir. Illustr.*, chap. 9.

⁴ Irenæus states that the Apocalypse was written in the time of Domitian, but he makes no mention of the banishment to Patmos.

⁵ They all refer to the statement in the Apocalypse.

critical writers as the Ephesian residence, because it has little bearing on the question of the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel. There is no reason to suppose, with Eichhorn, that the abode in Patmos is mentioned merely as a part of the Apocalyptic vision for the sake of dramatic effect, and that John was only in vision in the island called Patmos.

It is maintained that the words in the Apocalypse stating the occasion of John's residence in Patmos (*διὰ τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ*) do not necessarily imply that he was banished there on account of his faith. Weiss observes that the idea of John's banishment arose from a false interpretation of these words which appear in Clemens Alexandrinus and in Origen. He supposes that John retired to Patmos as a religious retreat, in order to receive in vision the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. The same view is adopted by Bleek, Lücke, and Düsterdieck. Hartwig supposes that he went to Patmos to preach the Gospel, which is most improbable, considering the smallness and the insignificance of the island; others, that he retired in order to avoid persecution; whilst Ebrard and Hilgenfeld affirm that the reference is to banishment on account of his faith.

It is also to be observed that among the Fathers who testify to the fact of John's banishment in Patmos, there is considerable diversity of opinion as to the time of its occurrence. Tertullian and Origen do not mention the name of the emperor; Epiphanius states that it occurred in the reign of Claudius; Theophylact and the superscription of a Syriac manuscript, in the reign

of Nero ; Clemens Alexandrinus, Victorinus, Eusebius, and Jerome, in the reign of Domitian ; and Dorotheus in the reign of Trajan. The period generally adopted by modern critics is the reign of Nero, because it is supposed that the Apocalypse is proved from internal evidence to have been written in that reign.¹ But this date is the least attested by external evidence, being only mentioned by Theophylact, who lived in the eleventh century, and who also contradicts himself, telling us in another place that John was condemned by Trajan.² Besides, it is doubtful if the persecution under Nero was lasting and extended beyond Rome. It was a sudden outburst of fury, occasioned by the blame of the burning of Rome being thrown upon the Christians. The best attested date is certainly the reign of Domitian. The persecution under Domitian was more extensive than that under Nero, and we learn that banishment to obscure islands was one of the means resorted to by that tyrant. If this was the case, John would be far advanced in life when banished to Patmos, supposing that this was the cause of his residence in that island. According to Eusebius³ he was released on the death of Domitian by Nerva (A.D. 96), and we know that that emperor set at liberty all those who were imprisoned by his predecessor.⁴

Patmos is a small and obscure island in the Ægean

¹ This opinion is adopted by Lücke, Neander, Baur, Düsterdieck.

² Theophylact on Matt. xx. 23.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 20, 23.

⁴ The question of time will afterwards be more fully considered when we come to the consideration of the Apocalypse ; at present we leave it undetermined.

Sea, about fifteen, or, according to others, eighteen miles in circumference, constituting one of the Sporades, at no great distance from the island of Samos, which lies opposite to Ephesus. It is seldom mentioned by ancient writers, and only its name occurs in Strabo.¹ It is a rocky island, with a sterile soil. There is only one town, divided into two parts, the lower Scala constituting the harbour, and the upper Scala situated on the height above. The present population is about 4000, and although the island belongs to Turkey, its inhabitants are all Greek Christians. There are many memorials of John in the island. The convent of St. John is on the highest point, and may almost be regarded as the fortress of the island. It possesses a valuable library, which is allowed to go to waste, owing to the ignorance of the priests. When Clarke visited the island in 1801, he found that neither the superior of the monastery nor his colleague could read.² The supposed abode of John, where the Apocalyptic visions were imparted to him, is a grotto or cave on the descent from the monastery to the town; over it is erected a chapel, where numerous lamps are always burning, and on its walls are rude drawings of scenes from the Apocalypse. Various spots are pointed out where miracles are said to have been performed by John; here he gave sight to a blind man, and there he raised the dead. Tischendorf thus gives the impression which the island made on him: "Silent lay the little island before me in the morning twilight. Here and there an olive

¹ Strabo, x. 5. 13. It is also mentioned by Pliny.

² Clarke's *Travels*, vol. vi. pp. 36 ff.

breaks the monotony of the rocky waste. The sea was still as the grave. Patmos reposed in it like a dead saint. John—that is the thought of the island. The island belongs to him; it is his sanctuary. The stones speak of him, and in every heart he lives.”¹

After the death of Domitian and the accession of Nerva, John returned to Ephesus. He was now in extreme old age. He had survived all the Apostles. He was the last of those who had been privileged to see and converse with Christ when on earth. He had blessed memories of the past and glorious hopes for the future. The remainder of his days were spent in peace and quietness in Ephesus. During the short and beneficent reign of Nerva persecution had entirely ceased. According to the best authenticated tradition, John survived until the reign of Trajan, who ascended the imperial throne A.D. 98. “John,” observes Irenæus, “remained among them (the disciples in Asia) up to the times of Trajan.”² As we have already observed, he was probably ten years younger than our Lord, so that there is no reason to adopt the statement of St. Jerome that he was a hundred years old when he died. He did not, like Peter and Paul, suffer martyrdom, but died a natural death. Thus John passed away calmly and serenely; his death resembled a translation; his soul ascended to that heaven the glories of which he had so vividly described, and the spirit of which he had so ardently cherished.

¹ Quoted by Schaff, *Apostolic Times*, vol. ii. p. 62, and by Farrar, *Early Days of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 159, note.

² *Adv. Hær.*, ii. 22, 5.

III.—THE CHARACTER OF ST. JOHN.

John has been well denominated the "Apostle of Love." Love is the spirit which breathes in all his writings. He reveals to us the nature and character of God as love; he delights to dwell on the loving disposition of his Master; and his repeated exhortation to his disciples is to love one another. Love, like a golden thread on a dark ground, runs through even the Apocalypse, although a revelation of the judgments of God.¹ Whilst with Paul faith is the ruling principle which dominates the Christian, with John the essence of religion consists in love. And as in his writings, so in his actions love is seen. When all the other Apostles forsook Christ in the hour of His trial, love drew John to the cross to receive from the dying Saviour His last requests; and no doubt it was on account of this love and tenderness of John that Jesus consigned to him the care of His mother. That Apostle who leant upon the bosom of the Saviour must largely have imbibed that spirit of love which actuated his Lord and Master.

But love was not with John a mere weak sentimental feeling, a colourless benevolence. We are too much accustomed to regard John as if he were effeminate,² as if there were a certain weakness or want of manliness about his character. On the contrary, combined with love we see in him an impetuosity, a severity of temper, a certain sternness, an intense hatred of evil. We

¹ See Rev. iii. 19, 20; vii. 17; xxi. 4; xxii. 16, 17.

² In all the portraits of John by the great masters he has a woman-like appearance.

find this trait of character flashing out on several occasions noticed by the Evangelists; notably when he conceived that a slight or insult had been offered to Christ. It was this quality which in early youth procured for him and his brother from his Master the surname Boanerges. And even in old age the same spirit of sternness against that which is evil was manifested; as when he cautioned the disciples against rendering to the false teachers even the ordinary rites of hospitality (2 John 10). In the Apocalypse especially this fiery spirit of John is seen.¹ The judgments of God are denounced against the ungodly; they who worship the beast and his image are consigned to the lake of fire, to be tormented for ever and ever. And this hatred of evil is but the negative expression of love. The more intensely one loves Christ, the more intensely does he hate Antichrist; the more we love God, the more we hate sin; the light excludes the darkness.. Thus there are two apparently opposite qualities in John, love and hatred to evil—qualities which, so far from being really contradictory, mutually imply each other, which constitute John at once the Apostle of love and the Son of Thunder, and which invest his character with a moral grandeur. “It is not surprising,” as Dean Stanley remarks, “that the deep stillness of such a character as this should, like the Oriental sky, break out from time to time in tempests of impassioned vehemence; still less that the character which was to excel all others in its devoted

¹ It is noteworthy that he commends the Church in Ephesus because “they *cannot* bear them which are evil” (Rev. ii. 2).

love of good should give indications—in its earlier stages even in excess—of that intense hatred of evil, without which love of good can hardly be said to exist.”¹

John possessed a retiring disposition: there was in him, as Ewald remarks, “a kind of delicate reserve and shyness.”² He seldom takes the lead; he is not foremost in action. It is Peter who is the spokesman, whilst John stands in the background; Peter goes before, John follows (John xxi. 20); John suggests, and Peter acts upon the suggestion (John xxi. 7). John is seldom mentioned in the Synoptical Gospels; and in his own Gospel he rarely alludes to himself; and when he does so, it is by circumlocution, as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” He only once mentions the name of his father, and only indirectly alludes to his mother and his brother. Whilst Petrine and Pauline parties were formed in the Church; whilst one said, “I am of Paul, and another, I am of Cephas” (1 Cor. i. 12), we never, either in Scripture or in the writings of the post-apostolic age, read of a Johannine party.

Drawn to the contemplative, as opposed to the active life, by his retiring temper, John, as a thinker, possessed a mind of the intuitive order. In his writings he seldom reasons, but the truth flashes into his mind; he feels and perceives the truth; a long train of thought is not necessary for him to arrive at a conclusion; “he looks up to heaven, and as he gazes

¹ *Sermons and Essays on the Apostolic Age*, p. 238.

² “Eine Art zarter Zurückhaltung und Scheu.” See Ewald’s *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, vol. vii. pp. 200, 201; translation, vol. viii. p. 155.

he tells us what he sees.”¹ His mode of thought is the opposite to that of Paul; he is not, like that Apostle, a reasoner, but has an immediate perception of the truth. In his writings his appeal is to the feelings; with him it is the heart which makes the Christian,—it is love which is the *summum bonum* of the Christian life. Hence there is a vein of mysticism both about the character and the writings of John; he is in some respects like Moses, a veiled prophet; he is so spiritual in his writings that none but the spiritual can fully comprehend him.

But above all, John lived in the truest, deepest, and most loving communion with Christ. He, beyond all the Apostles, enjoyed the love and friendship of Christ. There was something in John’s disposition, probably the overflowing spirit of love, that drew forth the affection of Christ toward him, and constituted him “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” And the friendship of Jesus must have been of unspeakable advantage to John; it must have sanctified and elevated his nature, so that the sphere in which he lived and moved must have been a heaven on earth. This invests the character of John with a peculiar sacredness, and almost elevates him above the human race. Friendship is one of the most innocent of our earthly pleasures; the friendship of two souls who are one in the Lord, inspired by the same hopes and animated by the same love to Christ, must be a holy heaven, transfusing its blessed influence through their lives; but the friendship of Jesus and John is a sacred shrine, a true holy of holies, which,

¹ Liddon, *Bampton Lectures*, p. 282.

next to our Lord's humanity, is the purest emblem of heaven upon earth. And even when Jesus left this world, this unique friendship must have continued, and John's whole subsequent life must have been a life in Christ, and a life filled with Christ. Christ's image was more deeply and more clearly impressed upon this Apostle than upon any of the sons of men; he was the most legible epistle of Jesus Christ. He was, as Meyer expresses it, "like a bright mirror, faithfully reflecting the most delicate features of the full glory of the Incarnate One; tender and humble, yet without sentimentalism, and with the full and resolute earnestness of apostolic energy."¹

There appears to be two leading phases or types of the Christian character represented by Paul and John; the one bold, active, energetic, ever ready to step to the front; the other retiring, spiritual, contemplative, willing to follow, but not to take the lead. The one more that of the Christian missionary, active in the diffusion of the Gospel and in the conversion of sinners; the other more that of the Christian pastor, more suited for building up believers and confirming them in the faith. In the great era of the Reformation the Pauline type of Christianity was discernible in Luther, whilst the Johannine type was seen in his coadjutor Melancthon; and the same diversity of type is seen among Christians in the present day.

¹ Meyer on *St. John's Gospel*, vol. i. p. 4, translation.

IV.—THE WRITINGS OF ST. JOHN.

John, next to Paul, is the most voluminous writer in the New Testament. Five writings have been ascribed to him, namely, the Fourth Gospel, a Catholic Epistle, two private letters, and the Apocalypse or the Book of the Revelation. There is considerable diversity in the nature and character of his writings. In the Gospel he writes as a historian ; in the larger Epistle as a Christian pastor ; in the private letters as a Christian friend ; and in the Apocalypse as one of the Old Testament prophets. And so also there is a corresponding diversity in the manner of writing. In the Gospel he writes as the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who was filled with the most intense love to Jesus ; in the Epistles as the Apostle of love ; and in the Apocalypse as the seer, the eagle whose glance penetrates heaven. John's three writings—the Gospel, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse—have been often compared. The Gospel exhibits Christ as in the world, the Epistle as in the heart, and the Apocalypse as in heaven. The Gospel sets forth the divine life as seen in the Person of Christ, the Epistle as seen in the individual Christian, and the Apocalypse as seen in the Church. In the Gospel we have a summary of Christian theology, in the Epistles a summary of Christian ethics, and in the Apocalypse a summary of Christian politics. In the Gospel we have the fundamental doctrines of the Christian's faith, in the Epistles the fundamental principles of the Christian's life, and in the Apocalypse the fundamental element of the Christian's

glory. In the Gospel we have the historical Christ, in the Epistles the spiritual Christ, and in the Apocalypse the glorified Christ.

The genuineness of all these writings has been more or less disputed. The extreme school of negative criticism rejects them all, whilst other negative critics admit the genuineness of one or more of them, and deny that of others. The subject will be fully considered when we come to the examination of each particular book. The genuineness of the Fourth Gospel is the great question of modern criticism—the battlefield of negative and positive criticism. It is generally admitted by all critics that the writer of the Fourth Gospel and the Catholic Epistle which bears the name of John was the same.¹ With regard to the authorship of the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse, the most diverse and contradictory opinions exist. Some hold that John was the author of both; others that he is the author of the Gospel, but not of the Apocalypse; others that he is the author of the Apocalypse, but not of the Gospel; and others that he is the author of neither. These are points reserved for after consideration.

There is also considerable diversity of opinion among those who admit the genuineness of the Johannine writings, regarding the time of their composition. Some consider that the Apocalypse was written twenty or twenty-five years before the Gospel and the Epistles; whilst others think that all the writings were nearly contemporaneous. This also is reserved to form the

¹ This has indeed been disputed by several writers, especially by those belonging to the Tübingen school.

subject of after consideration. It is, however, to be observed, that whatever the interval of time between these writings, they are all the writings of one advanced in years. John died at Ephesus in extreme old age, and even at the earliest time to which critics assign the Apocalypse, he must have been approaching sixty.

There is in the Third Epistle ascribed to John the evidence of a lost Epistle. We are not to suppose, with some, that we have in the New Testament all the epistles which the several writers ever wrote. This could not possibly be the case with the Apostle Paul, who was burdened with the care of all the Churches, and whose practice it was to write letters of recommendation. We have traces of a lost Epistle to the Laodiceans, and of a lost Epistle to the Corinthians;¹ and there is here evidence of a lost Epistle of John. Mention is made of an Epistle which John wrote to the Church of which Gaius was a member: "I wrote somewhat unto the Church, but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not" (3 John 9). The purport of this Epistle was evidently to recommend certain travelling brethren, probably evangelists, to the favourable notice of the Church. Attempts have been made to explain this Epistle without admitting that it has been lost. Some suppose that this writing was the First Epistle of John; others, that it was the Second; whilst others translate the verb *ἔγραψα*, "I would have written," and refer it to an unfulfilled intention on the part of the Apostle. All these are inadequate explanations.² The

¹ Col. iv. 16; 1 Cor. v. 9. See Gloag's *Introduction to the Pauline Epistles*: "On the Lost Epistles of Paul," pp. 23-36.

² Gloag's *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, p. 348.

words evidently refer to an epistle which John wrote to the Church, but which has not been preserved. Not all the writings of the inspired Apostles are preserved in the New Testament, but only those which God in His providence has judged to be necessary for the edification of His Church. What is lost may indeed be equally valuable with what remains, but not essentially necessary.

V.—THE STYLE OF JOHN'S WRITINGS.

It is hazardous to test the genuineness of a writing by the nature of its style, unless indeed the style of the writer has very marked peculiarities; in which case, if the writing be in direct contrast to these peculiarities, we may, with some degree of probability, infer its spuriousness.¹ Eminent writers, as, for example, Shakespeare, Milton, and Goethe,² often wrote with a marked difference of style when the subjects treated were different. Many writers argue from the diversity of style in the Apocalypse and in the Fourth Gospel that these two books could not have proceeded from the same author. This is a point of so much importance that its examination is reserved until we come to the consideration of the authenticity of the Apocalypse.

A writing frequently bears the impress of the mental

¹ Even then the inference would be precarious. No writer has such marked peculiarities as Carlyle, but in his *Life of Schiller* there is a comparative absence of these peculiarities.

² Hase, discussing the difference of style between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse, cites as an analogy the marked difference between the first and second parts of Goethe's *Faust*.

peculiarities of the author. This, we think, is seen in the writings ascribed to John; they are the canvas on which his portrait is painted. We see the same John, the Apostle of love and the Son of Thunder. The love which attracted the love of Jesus and secured for this Apostle the first place in His affections is impressed upon every sentence of the Epistle, is diffused throughout the Gospel, and is not absent from the Apocalypse. The severity of temper and hatred of evil which procured for John the title Boanerges are seen in the spirit of sternness which pervades the Epistle and in the denunciations of the Apocalypse. The tenderness which induced the Saviour to consign Mary to his care is exhibited in his affectionate addresses to the disciples, calling them his "little children." And the zeal for Christ which induced him to forbid a person who followed not Christ to cast out devils is manifest in the earnestness with which he exhorts Christians to devote themselves to the service of their Lord and Master.

There is a remarkable simplicity in the style of John. His vocabulary is small; the same words—love, life, light, the world—continually occur, and are interwoven together. "The life is the light of man;" "Love not the world." The sentences are simple in construction, being in the terse aphoristic Hebrew manner, and not in the involved structure conformable to the genius of the Greek language, and illustrated in the Epistles of Paul. Connecting particles are also very sparingly employed. Hence, of all the writings of the New Testament, none are so easily read and translated as those of John. This simplicity of style and ease in translation pervade

all the writings ascribed to John, the Apocalypse as well as the Gospel and the Epistles.

There is in the Johannine writings a peculiar kind of repetition. The same thoughts, or at least thoughts with little variation of meaning, are repeated for the sake of emphasis. Often the same idea is expressed both positively and negatively. This form of repetition is especially seen in the Fourth Gospel and in the Catholic Epistle.¹ The following are examples of this peculiarity of style :—"All things are made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." "If a man love Me, he will keep My words. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings."² "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." "Every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God" (1 John i. 5 ; iii. 14 ; iv. 7, 8). There are also throughout the Johannine writings a series of contrasts, so brought forward as if they had a concrete existence. Thus, for example, light and darkness, life and death, truth and falsehood, love and hatred, are continually opposed to each other. And in the Apocalypse the same system of contrasts is employed. There runs throughout the whole of this mystical book the contrast between Christ and the world.

With the simplicity in style and diction, and even in

¹ This peculiarity of style is hardly discernible in the Apocalypse ; yet see Rev. ii. 13 ; iii. 15, 16.

² John i. 3 ; xiv. 23, 24. See also iii. 17, 18, 36 ; v. 23, 24 ; viii. 12, 23, 47 ; ix. 39 ; xii. 25.

the thoughts and sentiments of the Johannine writings, there is combined a real profundity which no human intellect can fathom. The Fourth Gospel especially is remarkable for its depth; it has been well called by the Fathers "the spiritual Gospel," as compared with the Synoptical Gospels. It opens the deepest recesses of the spiritual life; it discloses the very heart of the incarnate God; it reveals the Divine human nature which Christ possessed; it lifts up the veil, and lets us see into the holy of holies. The two preponderating ideas are life and light, and these are embodied in Christ: He is at once the Life and the Light of man, the source of all spiritual life, and the essence of all spiritual truth, the sun of the moral universe. The writings of John may be compared to a well of water, so clear and sparkling that at first one thinks he sees to the bottom; but that well is so deep, that the more one gazes into it, the deeper does it appear, and no one has yet been able to fathom it. Adam of St. Victor (A.D. 1192), in classical language, thus describes St. John:—

" Volat avis sine meta
 Quo nec vates nec propheta
 Evolavit altius :
 Tam implenda quam impleta
 Numquam videt tot secreta
 Purus homo purius." ¹

¹ These words have been translated into English verse as follows:—

" Bird of God, with boundless flight,
 Soaring far beyond the height
 Of the bard or prophet old.
 Truth fulfilled and truth to be,
 Never purer mystery,
 Did a purer tongue unfold."

And the great Christian poet of the Middle Ages, when looking intently upon John, represents himself as gazing upon the sun as if in an eclipse, and becoming dazzled with its rays, so as almost to lose the power of vision ; and similar is the effect produced by pondering on his writings.

“ As he who looks intent,
And striving with searching ken how he may see
The sun in his eclipse, and through desire
Of seeing loseth power of sight ; so I
Peer'd on that last resplendence.”¹

VI.—INTERPRETATION OF ST. JOHN'S WRITINGS.

Of course, in the interpretation of St. John's writings we must first apply those ordinary rules which are applicable to any other documents. Here are writings presented to our consideration in manuscripts written in the Greek language. The first thing that we must do is to see that we have a pure text ; we must compare the different manuscripts which we have of those writings, the different versions which have been made of them, and the quotations from them which occur in the writings of the Fathers. And this has been done by qualified scholars with such patient and laborious research, with such a multiplicity of materials for examination, and with such success, that we have every reason to believe that the text is almost identical with that of the author.² Having secured a pure text, we must

Dante's *Paradise*, Cary's translation.

² This is least true of the Apocalypse, the text of which is the least certain of any of the New Testament books. This point will afterwards be referred to in an examination of the Apocalypse.

next translate it from the Greek into our own language. And here also the learning of scholars has been so successfully applied that we may with confidence believe that we have a translation as correct as can possibly be obtained. But having done this, we have only arrived at the commencement of our task; the great difficulty is to penetrate into the hidden sense which the author intended to convey; and in a writer so profound and mystical as John, notwithstanding the simplicity of his style and diction, this is a task of no easy accomplishment.

One thing at least is essential, that we must come to the study of John's writings with a candid and truth-loving spirit. This is an essential prerequisite in the interpretation of every writing; but it is especially essential in the interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures, on account of their importance and of our liability to err in this particular. We must have a simple regard to the truth; not to confirm our own opinions, not to prove the truth of the creed we profess, but with the sole desire to know what the sacred writers teach; this should be our aim. And yet it cannot be expected that we come to the study of John's writings, for example, destitute of all preconceived opinions; our minds are not entirely blank; we have already our established Christian beliefs, but we must be ready to bring these beliefs to the test of the Johannine writings, and endeavour to find out whether they are in conformity with the statements contained in them. An impartial and candid mind does not consist in the absence of opinions, but in a readiness to adjust those

opinions according to the meaning discovered or discoverable in the writings.

The interpretation of the Johannine writings is peculiarly difficult by reason of their profundity. Hence one essential element of interpretation is sympathy with John's spirit. Sympathy with the writer is essential for the thorough interpretation of any writing; we must put ourselves in the position and imbibe the spirit of the author: no one can thoroughly understand and appreciate Shakespeare without a Shakesperian mind. But this is especially necessary in interpreting John's writings; these are so profoundly spiritual, that, unless we have the spiritual element in our character, we may read and translate them, but we cannot understand them. It is only a Johannine Christian who can truly understand and interpret John's writings. It requires such a spiritual insight, as is rarely possessed, fully to fathom the deep things contained in them. Hence a religious and spiritual nature is essential; we must have largely imbibed the Spirit of Jesus Christ before we can enter into the spirit of John's writings. This well is deep, and, if destitute of a spiritual mind, we have nothing wherewith to draw. As Origen strikingly puts it: "The Gospels are the first-fruits of all the Scriptures, and the first-fruits of the Gospels is that of John, into whose meaning no man can enter unless he has reclined upon the bosom of Jesus. He must become a second John, and take John as a Jesus from Jesus."

Hitherto we have not mentioned, or incidentally only touched upon, the inspiration of the Johannine

writings; and the question arises, What influence has the element of inspiration upon their interpretation? How far does it modify the laws of ordinary criticism? Now, in a certain sense, the inspiration of the writings has nothing to do with their interpretation; the ordinary rules of criticism applicable to all writings are to be applied to them; their inspiration is an after consideration, and belongs to the sphere of dogmatics, and not to that of criticism. But, on the other hand, the inspiration of the writings requires that we should read them with faith, receiving them as the true and faithful sayings of God. It would be entirely foreign, in such a work as this, to enter into the question of inspiration; but we would only remark that if there are found in any writing internal presumptions in favour of inspiration, these presumptions are abundantly apparent in the writings ascribed to John. There is a spirituality, a purity, a love, a Divine impress, an elevation, a calmness, a repose about the Fourth Gospel and the Catholic Epistle which stamp them as having been written under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. And the Apocalypse professes to be a revelation from God; and if it is, as is generally believed, a prediction of the events which shall befall the Church and the world, and if some of these events predicted have already taken place, it can only proceed from that God who sees the end in the beginning, and before whose omniscient eyes the future is as the present.

DISSERTATION.

LEGENDS CONCERNING ST. JOHN.

THE legends connected with the life and death of John are more numerous, more plausible, and more interesting than those connected with the life of any of the other Apostles. We have legends concerning Peter and Paul, but these are few and extravagant compared with those concerning John. Of course, the authority of these legends is weak compared with the authentic accounts of the Apostle contained in Scripture; but still a few of them are credible, being attested by those of the early Fathers who lived near the times to which they relate, and a few are so plausible and natural, so much in harmony with the character of the Apostle, as to have gained considerable acceptance. These legends differ greatly in the degree of their credibility; in some we can ascertain or guess the germs of truth, whilst others are wholly unhistorical, and have their origin in the credulity of the age. But still, upon the whole, they are in harmony with the personal character of John, as delineated in the Gospels and in his writings, and have impressed upon them one or other of his two characteristic features—his intense love to men and his intense hatred of sin. In mentioning the legends of John, it may be convenient to state them in the order of their apparent probability.

The most credible and best attested of these legends is the encounter of John with Cerinthus. John, going to bathe at Ephesus, finds that the heresiarch Cerinthus is in the bath-house, and flies from it with horror, as if a judgment should overtake even the buildings which Cerinthus frequented. The authority for this legend is Irenæus. "There are," he observes, "those who have heard from him (Polycarp) that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, 'Let us fly lest the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.'"¹ This legend is twice referred to by Eusebius on the authority of Irenæus, and he states that Irenæus received it by tradition from Polycarp.² Epiphanius, a much later writer, alludes to the tradition, but substitutes Ebion for Cerinthus.³ Ebion, however, is a mere supposititious character, the name having arisen by mistake from a supposed founder of the sect of the Ebionites, whereas that term is an appellative denoting their poverty. Jerome expands the legend by telling us that the bath-house actually fell. The testimony of Irenæus is in itself of considerable weight, but this is greatly increased as he gives it on the authority of his master Polycarp, the disciple of John. Nor is there anything improbable in the circumstance.⁴ Cerinthus was a

¹ *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 3, 4.

² *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 28, iv. 14; also Nicephorus, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 30.

³ Epiphanius, *Hær.*, xxx. 24.

⁴ The credibility of the legend is questioned by Farrar, *The Early Days of Christianity*, vol. ii. pp. 162, 163. He thinks it opposed to the benevolent spirit of St. John; but see below.

Jewish Gnostic; he held Docetic views concerning the person of Jesus Christ; he distinguished between Jesus and Christ, and taught that Jesus was a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary, upon whom Christ descended at His baptism. And it is generally supposed that these opinions of Cerinthus were opposed by John in his First Epistle. This hatred of what he conceived to be pernicious error reminds us of the temper of the same Apostle when he wished to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans (Luke ix. 54); and even in his old age this indignant spirit was not diminished, as is apparent from his Second Epistle, in which he directs his converts not to receive into their houses those who should bring false doctrines along with them.¹ St. John's love to Christ would not suffer the honour of his Master to be attacked with impunity. "We have," observes Dean Stanley, "a living exemplification of the possibility of uniting the deepest love and gentleness with the sternest denunciation of moral evil."² And the remark of Olshausen is deserving of attention: "There is no admissible ground for considering the story untrue. On the contrary, 3 John 10 appears suggestive of the key of John's conduct towards that heretic; and even this, when rightly understood, contains nothing contradictory to the mild character of the Evangelist. The bias, under which this was for a long time viewed as a fabrication, proceeded simply and solely from that weakness and indifference with respect to heretics which

¹ 2 John 10, 11. See before, p. 64.

² Stanley, *Sermons and Essays of the Apostolic Age*, p. 271.

persons had accustomed themselves to regard as toleration and kindness.”¹

Another legend, possessed of considerable plausibility, is the address, “Little children, love one another,” with which John, when aged, was accustomed to salute his disciples. This legend rests on the authority of Jerome.² “The Apostle John,” he observes, “tarried at Ephesus to an extreme old age, and could only be carried into the church in the arms of his disciples. He was unable to address them at length, but was accustomed to stretch forth his hands to his disciples, and to exclaim, ‘Little children, love one another.’ At length his hearers, being wearied with hearing him always repeat the same words, asked him, ‘Master, why dost thou always speak thus?’ His reply was, ‘It is the Lord’s command, and if only this be done, it is enough.’” As the former legend displays one side of St. John’s character—his hatred of sin, so this displays the other side—his love. It is true that the authority on which this legend rests, that of Jerome, is of a late date; but there is something so natural and affecting in it, so entirely in conformity with the loving disposition of the Apostle, and so pure and elevating, that its truth has been admitted by many; it reveals to us the very heart of John, the great Apostle of love.

A third legend is the well-known story of John and the robber, recorded by Clemens Alexandrinus, and preserved for us in the history of Eusebius.³ After the death of Domitian, John returned from Patmos to

¹ Olshausen *On the Gospels*, vol. iii. 170 (translation: T. & T. Clark).

² Jerome, *Comment. ad Gal.*, vi. 10.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 23.

Ephesus. In the course of his episcopal visitations he came to a city, supposed to be Smyrna. There he met with a young man of a noble and pleasing appearance, and he said to the bishop, "Him I commend to you with all earnestness in the presence of the Church and of Christ." The bishop promised to take care of him. He received him into his house, instructed and watched over him, and at length baptized him. But after this the bishop relaxed in his vigilance. The young man, led astray by dissolute companions, and falling from bad to worse, became at last the captain of a band of robbers. John, on his next visit to Smyrna, addressed the bishop, "Restore to me my deposit which I and Christ committed to thee in the presence of the Church over which thou dost preside." The bishop imagined that he alluded to a sum of money which had been committed to his charge. "No," said the Apostle, "I demand the young man, the soul of thy brother." The bishop replied, "He is dead." "Dead!" answered the Apostle, "by what kind of death?" "Dead to God he has turned a robber, and has beset these mountains with an armed band." The aged Apostle rent his clothes, took a horse, and rode off to the band of robbers. He suffered himself to be taken, and asked to be led to their captain. The robber, as soon as he recognised John, filled with shame, took to flight. John, forgetful of his age, pursued after him, crying, "O my son, why dost thou fly from me, thy father—thou an armed man, and I old and defenceless? There is still hope of life for thee. I will intercede with Christ for thee. I will cheerfully suffer death for thee. Stay! believe that

Christ has sent me." The words were too much for the robber; he stopped with downcast looks; he threw away his arms; he came trembling, and with tears threw himself at the feet of the Apostle. The Apostle brought him back to Smyrna, became his sponsor before the Lord, and restored him to the Church; "affording," writes the historian, "a beautiful example of true repentance, a striking evidence of regeneration, and a trophy of a visible resurrection." The legend is certainly very beautiful; and although there is much in the narrative that is rhetorical, yet there may be a germ of truth in it. It gives us an admirable insight into the character of John,—into his intense love for the souls of men. The legend was afterwards expanded. Rufinus informs us that John afterwards consecrated the young man to the episcopal office.

Various legends are gathered around the composition of John's Gospel. There is a considerable diversity in these traditions. Irenæus simply informs us that John wrote the Gospel: "Afterwards John," he observes, "the disciple of the Lord, who also leant upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia."¹ Clemens Alexandrinus adds to this by informing us as to the motives which induced John to write his Gospel. "John," he observes, "perceiving that what had reference to the body in the Gospel of our Saviour was sufficiently detailed, and being encouraged by his familiar friends, and urged by the Spirit, wrote a spiritual Gospel."² Jerome goes further: he tells us that when the presbyters of Ephesus asked

¹ *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 1, 1.

² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, vi. 14.

him to compose a Gospel, he called them together for a common fast; that then suddenly, as if by a miracle, he broke out into the words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."¹ And Gregory, Bishop of Tours, embellishes the account still further. He tells us that upon a hill near Ephesus there was an uncovered oratory whither the Apostle used often to retire for prayer and contemplation, and where he obtained of God that it might not rain in that place till he had finished his Gospel.² This instance shows how legends grow by length of time; the simple fact recorded by Irenæus, that John composed a Gospel, is by successive generations added to and embellished.

A very doubtful legend is the well-known story of John's immersion in a caldron of boiling oil. The authority for it is Tertullian. He thus relates the incident: "How happy is the Church of Rome, on which the Apostles poured forth their doctrine and their blood; where Peter endures a passion like his Lord's; where Paul wins his crown in a death like that of John the Baptist; where John was first plunged unhurt into boiling oil, and afterwards banished to his island home."³ Tertullian mentions this incident as occurring at Rome; but he does not name the emperor, though most probably it was Nero, in whose reign the Apostles Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom. Jerome twice alludes to this narrative with various additions of his own. In

¹ Jerome, *De Vir. Illus.*, 29.

² *De Glor. Martyr.*, i. 30; Cave's *Lives of the Apostles*, p. 275.

³ *De Præscript. Hæc.*, chap. xxxvi. See Lipsius' *Die Apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*, vol. i. p. 419.

one passage he quotes Tertullian as his authority: "Tertullian relates that John, being cast by Nero into a caldron of boiling oil, came forth more healthy and vigorous than when he was cast in."¹ And in another passage he appeals to ecclesiastical records known in his time: "It is a subject of inquiry how the sons of Zebedee, James and John, could have drunk the cup of martyrdom, when the death of James only, who was beheaded by the command of Herod, is recorded in the Scriptures, and when John ended his life by a natural death. But if we give heed to ecclesiastical records, where it is reported that he was cast for martyrdom into a caldron of boiling oil, and then went out as an athlete to receive the crown of Christ, being immediately banished to the island of Patmos, we shall see that in spirit he too was a martyr, and that John drank that cup whereby he confessed Christ, and which the three children in the furnace drank too, although the persecutor did not shed his blood."² Many ecclesiastical historians adopt this legend as true in its general details; indeed, some receive it as a historical statement about which there was no dubiety. It must, however, be rejected as untrustworthy. It rests solely upon the authority of Tertullian, who lived toward the close of the second century, and who is given to exaggeration and embellishment. It is not alluded to by any of the other early Fathers, nor by Eusebius in his History. Nor is there the slightest proof or tradition elsewhere that John was ever in Rome; his residence, after he left

¹ Jerome, *Adv. Jovinianum*.

² Jerome, *Comment in Matt.*, xx. 27; see Trench's *Life and Character of St. John*, pp. 188, 189.

Jerusalem, is restricted to Ephesus and its neighbourhood. The legend probably originated, as Jerome's account suggests, in the desire to bring the life of John into accordance with the statement of the Lord, that he should drink of the cup of which He drank. Origen, when he alludes to this statement of our Lord, makes no mention of John being cast into boiling oil, but states that it was fulfilled by his banishment to Patmos for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Another tradition, but resting on slight authority, is the legend of John and the partridge. The monk Cassian (A.D. 420) is the sole authority for this legend.¹ "It is related that the Evangelist John was one day gently caressing a partridge, and that a young man, returning from hunting, seeing him thus employed, asked in astonishment, 'How so illustrious a man could employ himself with so trifling an occupation.' 'What hast thou in thine hand?' asked the Apostle. 'A bow,' replied the youth. 'And why dost thou carry it unstrung?' 'Because,' replied the hunter, 'it would lose its elasticity were I to keep it always bent.' 'Then,' replied John, 'do not wonder that I should relax my mind, without which the spirit would flag from over-exertion, and not be able to respond to the call of duty when necessity requires it.'" This anecdote is a testimony to the impression which John's calmness and serenity left upon the Church. Although his spirit was of an almost angelic nature, yet he could stoop to ordinary and apparently trivial recreations.

¹ Cassian, *Collat.*, xxiv. 21; Niese, *Das Leben des heiligen Johannes*, p. 122; Farrar's *Early Days of Christianity*, vol. ii. pp. 172, 173; Hilgenfeld, *Einleitung in das N. T.*, p. 405.

Another legend informs us that John, as if he were of priestly descent, wore upon his forehead the golden plate which formed part of the official attire of the Jewish high priest. This legend rests on the authority of Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus toward the close of the second century: "John, that rested on the bosom of our Lord, who was a priest that bore the sacerdotal plate (πέταλον), and martyr and teacher, he also rests at Ephesus."¹ The sacerdotal plate, here mentioned, is doubtless the plate of gold which was put upon the forehead of the high priest: "And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, Holiness to the Lord. And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre; upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead" (Exod. xxviii. 36-38). Of course, taken literally, this legend must be entirely rejected. John did not belong to the priestly race, nor did he wear any sacerdotal plate upon his forehead. But understood metaphorically—and it is probable that in this sense only Polycrates relates it—the legend conveys the truth. John, by reason of his purity and consecration to the Lord, may well be called a holy priest, and indeed such an appellation is assigned to all believers (1 Pet. ii. 9); and it may well be said of him that he bore upon his forehead the inscription, "Holiness to the Lord." He must in his old age have been regarded by the Ephesian Church with peculiar reverence, as the living representative of Christ upon the earth.

We now leave those legends which have some sem-

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 31, v. 24.

blance of truth about them, some germs of fact at their foundation, so that they may be possible realities, and come to those which are incredible myths, though not without instruction, if understood as parables. Of this nature is the narrative given us of John's interview with Domitian. John, in consequence of the edict of Domitian, was arrested at Ephesus and conveyed to Rome. He was brought before the Emperor, and ordered to be put to death by drinking a cup of deadly poison. John drained the cup, and, to the astonishment of Domitian, suffered no harm. Then Domitian in anger accused those who had brought the cup with having deceived him, having given a cup wherein was no poison. But John said, "Be not angry, O Emperor, but make the trial, and you shall see with your own eyes the deadly nature of the poison. Let a condemned criminal be brought from one of your prisons." The Emperor commanded that it should be so done. John poured water into the cup, stirred up the dregs which remained at the bottom, and handed the cup to the criminal, who no sooner drank it than he fell down dead. Domitian commanded the dead body to be removed; but John stood by it and said, "O God of heaven and earth, in the name of Jesus Christ, Thine only-begotten Son, I beseech Thee restore the soul to this person seized by the power of death, in order that Domitian might know that Thy Son is Lord of life and death." Then he took him by the hand and raised him up.¹ Most probably this legend had its origin in the promise made by our

¹ For a statement of this legend see Niese, *Das Leben des heiligen Johannes*, p. 76 ff.

Lord to His disciples that if they drank any deadly thing it should in no wise hurt them (Mark xvi. 18).

Another legend tells how two wealthy young men of Ephesus, Atticus and Eugenius, were so moved by the preaching of John that they sold all that they had, and distributed their money to the poor, and became the disciples of John. When, shortly after, they came with John to Pergamum, they saw those who were once their slaves dressed in splendid garments and adorned with costly jewels, and living in great honour and prosperity. Then their envy was excited, and they repented that they had deprived themselves of their riches. John, perceiving the thoughts of their hearts, enjoined them to go into the wood and cut down a bundle of rods, and gather some stones out of the brook, and bring them to him. And when they had done as he had said, and brought the rods and stones to John, he, in the name of the Lord Jesus, converted the rods into gold and the stones into diamonds. Then he said to them, "Go now and purchase back your lands, and put on silken clothes and golden ornaments. Be again rich on earth, but beggars throughout eternity. Blossom as the rose which shall quickly fade away. Walk in silken garments in order to be found at the day of judgment naked and bare." Then he reminded them of the parable of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus, in order that they might know what would befall those, who had preferred the treasures of this earth to those which were eternal and heavenly. The legend goes on to say that John raised a dead man to life, and that Atticus and Eugenius were so much impressed, that

they threw themselves down before the Apostle and implored his forgiveness; and that after thirty days of penance the gold rods were again converted into wood, and the precious stones into pebbles.¹

There are numerous legends connected with the death of John. Indeed those legends appear to have commenced even in the lifetime of the Apostle. His venerable character, his survival of all the Apostles, his exemption from martyrdom, and his extreme old age, had given rise to the idea that he should never die—that he should either remain alive until the second coming of Christ, or, as a reward for his holiness and a proof of the peculiar affection of Christ, be translated to heaven without dying. Allusion is made to this supposition in the Gospel of John, and it would appear that some verses at the close were written for the express purpose of correcting this idea: “This saying therefore went forth among the brethren, that that disciple should not die; yet Jesus said not unto him, that he should not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?” (John xxi. 23). The special legends connected with the death of John are, however, of late origin; they do not occur in the writings of the early Fathers. Tertullian tells us expressly that John died: “Even John underwent death, although concerning him there had prevailed the unfounded expectation that he would remain alive until the coming of the Lord.”²

We have the following legend of his burial. John, perceiving that the time of his departure was at hand,

¹ Niese, *Das Leben des heiligen Johannes*, pp. 103-106.

² Tertullian, *De Anima*, chap. 1.

called all his disciples together, and gave them many exhortations. He then went with the presbyters of the Church of Ephesus to the cemetery and commanded them to dig a grave; and when the grave was completed, he calmly took off his upper garments and laid himself down as one going to sleep on his bed. He then commanded them to put on the gravestone and to depart. The next morning, when they came to the sepulchre and rolled away the stone, they found nothing but his grave-clothes, and a fountain sprung up from his tomb. Then the disciples remembered the words of the Lord Jesus, how He had formerly said to Peter, "If I will that he remain until I come, what is that to thee?"¹ The idea was not only that John rose immediately from the dead, but that he never died. Hippolytus tells us that Christ's first coming was preceded by John the Baptist, and that His second coming will be preceded by Enoch, Elijah, and John. And Ephraem of Antioch tells us that there are three persons, corresponding to the three dispensations of the word, still in the body—Enoch before the law, Elijah under the law, and John under the Gospel.

Another legend is that John is not dead, but sleeping in the grave. He is indeed buried, but he is kept alive by the miraculous power of Christ until the period of His second coming. The earth upon his grave heaves, in consequence of his breathing. This legend is alluded to by St. Augustine, who, although he does not himself credit it, yet saw in it nothing extravagant. "Of John," he says, "we have the tradition

¹ Niese, *Das Leben*, &c., pp. 134-136; Cave's *Lives of the Apostles*, p. 368.

that is found in the apocryphal Scriptures, that he was present, in good health, when he ordered a sepulchre to be made for him; and when it was dug and prepared with all possible care, he laid himself down there as in a bed, and became immediately defunct; yet, as those think who so understand the words of the Lord, not really defunct, but only lying like one in such a condition, and, while accounted dead, was actually buried when asleep, and that he will so remain until the coming of Christ, making known meanwhile the fact of his life by the bubbling up of the dust, which is believed to be forced by the breath of the sleeper to ascend from the depths to the surface of the grave.”¹ And he adds that he had heard this account from those who are not altogether incredible witnesses.

The legend was also prevalent, especially in the Middle Ages, that John was still alive, and that he often appeared. Thus we have the legend of his appearance to Theodosius the Great to encourage him in his wars against his rivals to the imperial throne; to Gregory Thaumaturgus to inspire him with zeal in his missions to the heathen; to Edward the Confessor and the English pilgrims, as represented on the screen of the Confessor's Chapel in Westminster Abbey; and to James IV. of Scotland before the battle of Flodden, to warn him against waging war with the English.² All these legends prove the high position which John occupied in the opinion of the Christian Church, and the supreme importance assigned to him among the founders of Christianity.

¹ Augustine *On St. John*, vol. ii. p. 549 (translation: T. & T. Clark).

² Farrar's *Early Days of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 177.

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN.

LITERATURE—The literature on the Gospel of John is very extensive. The works on the Johannine controversy will be mentioned when we come to a consideration of the history of that controversy. A complete list of them from 1792 to 1875 is given by Dr. Caspar Gregory in an appendix to the translation of Luthardt's *St. John the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, to which several important recent works have to be added. Schürer, in a small tractate entitled *Ueber den gegenwärtigen Stand der johannischen Frage*, gives an interesting statement of the present state of the controversy.

Modern commentaries on the Gospel of John are very numerous. The most important are those of Lücke (Bonn, 1820; 3rd edition, 1840); De Wette (Berlin, 1826; 5th edition, edited by Brückner, 1863); Tholuck (Hamburg, 1827; 5th edition, Gotha, 1857; translated by Krauth in Clarke's *Theological Library*, 1874); Olshausen (Königsberg, 1832; translated, Edinburgh, 1863); Hilgenfeld (Halle, 1849); Luthardt (Nuremberg, 1852; translated in Clarke's *Theological Library*, 1876); Meyer (3rd edition, 1856; last edition, edited by Weiss; translated, Edinburgh, 1874); Lange (Bonn, 1860; American translation, with large additions, by Dr. Schaff, 1871); Ebrard (Königsberg, 1861); Ewald (Göttingen, 1862); Hengstenberg (Berlin, 1863; translated, Edinburgh, 1871); Godet (Paris, 1864; translated, Edinburgh, 1887); Westcott (in *Speaker's Commentary*, London, 1880); Milligan and Moulton (in Schaff's *Popular Commentary*, Edinburgh and New York, 1880); Thoma (Berlin, 1882); Plummer (in *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Cambridge, 1866); Reynolds (in the *Pulpit Commentary*, London, 1888). The most valuable of these are the Commentaries of Meyer, Godet, and Bishop Westcott.

The works treating of the question of genuineness are the special sections in the Introductions to the New Testament. The most important of these by German critics are those of Bleek (translated, Edinburgh, 1869; the last edition, much altered, by Mangold, Berlin,

1886), Credner, Hilgenfeld, Holtzmann, and Weiss (translated, London, 1888). Of English critics may be mentioned Alford, in his *Introduction to John's Gospel* in his *Greek Testament*; the two very different Introductions of the venerable Dr. Samuel Davidson (*Introduction to the New Testament*, London, 1848; *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, 2nd edition, London, 1882), and Salmon's *Introduction to the New Testament* (London, 1885). The works of Dr. Sanday on the *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* and on the *Gospels of the Second Century* are most valuable. Dr. Ezra Abbot's work on the *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* (London, 1882) contains an exhaustive account of the external evidences in favour of the Johannine authorship. Kirchhofer's *Quellensammlung* and Charteris' *Canonicity* contain the references to the Gospel in the writings of the early Fathers. Other important works will be mentioned in the course of this Introduction.

I.—THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPEL.

The authenticity of the Fourth Gospel—whether this Gospel is really of apostolic origin or only the production of an anonymous writer of the second century—is perhaps the most important question in Biblical criticism discussed in the present day. It is on this point that the battle between positive and negative criticism is being fought both in this country and in Germany. Critics of distinguished eminence have arrayed themselves on both sides.¹ And certainly the subject discussed is one of primary importance; for this Gospel, by reason of the loftiness of its doctrine, the spirituality of its teaching, and especially its positive statements concerning the supreme dignity of Christ, is one of the most valuable documents of the Word of God; and were

¹ The consideration of the Johannine controversy is reserved until we come to discuss the objections to the genuineness of John's Gospel.

it withdrawn from the Scriptures of the New Testament, we should be sensible of an enormous blank. "It is not surprising," as Keim remarks, "that the battle of criticism has been fiercest upon this ground."¹ It is indeed true that there is a danger of exaggerating the importance of this question, as if our faith in the truth of Christianity depended on the fact whether John did or did not write the Gospel which bears his name. We are reminded that Christianity existed and flourished more than half a century before that Gospel was written. Paul's great apostolic labours had been closed, and Christian Churches had been planted in all the great cities of Proconsular Asia, Macedonia, and Greece, and in Rome itself. Multitudes of believers had attached themselves to the Lord, and adorned their profession of Christianity by holy and consistent lives before this Gospel had disclosed to them the heart of Jesus, and made more fully manifest the mystery of His incarnation. But still it may admit of a question, whether our views of Christ's person as the incarnate Logos, and of the loftiness of His character as the manifestation of Divine Love, would not have been materially altered if we had not the Fourth Gospel. The divinity of Christ, as seen in the Synoptic Gospels, is much more clearly revealed in the Fourth Gospel, not only by the direct statements it contains, but in those discourses of Jesus it relates. We do not mean that the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence and divinity does in any sense depend on the Fourth Gospel; this doctrine is as clearly taught in the writings of Paul as in those of John; but

¹ Keim's *Jesus of Nazara*, vol. i. p. 142, translation.

the doctrine of the incarnate Logos is peculiar to John. "Without this Gospel," as even Schenkel observes, "the unfathomable depth, the inaccessible height of the character of the Saviour of the world would be wanting to us, and His boundless influence, renewing all humanity, would for ever remain a mystery."¹

The Fourth Gospel is anonymous; it claims, however, to be the work of an eye-witness, and it is further evident from certain statements that the author professes himself to be the Apostle John, the son of Zebedee. There is frequent reference in this Gospel to a certain disciple called the "disciple whom Jesus loved;" and it is this disciple who professes to be the author of the Fourth Gospel. Thus we are informed that the disciple whom Jesus loved was present at the crucifixion, and, after the account of the piercing of our Lord's side, these words occur: "He that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe."² Now it is evident from a number of considerations, and is almost universally admitted, that by "the disciple whom Jesus loved" was meant the Apostle John.³ This self-assertion on the part of the author has been used as an objection against the genuineness of the Gospel, as

¹ *A Sketch of the Character of Jesus*, p. 34, translation.

² John xix. 35. Hilgenfeld and others contend that this verse is really a disclaimer of the Johannine authorship, inasmuch as the Evangelist here distinguishes himself from the eye-witness of the crucifixion, the beloved disciple. It is now, however, generally admitted that it is quite in accordance with the Evangelist's style to refer to himself under the above formula.

³ Lützelberger conjectures that Andrew was the person intended. Späth thinks that he was Nathanael; and Scholten, an ideal character, the spiritual brother of Jesus.

savouring of self-conceit, as asserting a pre-eminence over the other Apostles, and as made with a design to give authority to the writing;¹ but it is not inconsistent with the testimony of the Synoptists to John's position among the twelve, and is very different from the positive assertions made in apocryphal books, where the names of the supposed authors are expressly given and paraded. Here there is a reticence, and it is only by inference that we learn that the Apostle John is meant.

The authenticity of the Gospel of John is as strongly attested by external evidence as almost any other book in the New Testament. Perhaps the earliest attestation is that contained in the book itself. The last chapter (John xxi.) is evidently supplementary, but, from the sameness in its diction, is generally believed, with the exception of the two last verses, to have been written by the author of the Gospel. At the close of it is the following anonymous attestation: "This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true."² This attestation is found in all the manuscripts and versions of the Gospel, and is therefore of undeniable antiquity. We can hardly suppose that it proceeded from the author himself;³ it is differently worded from the similar attestation in John xix. 35;

¹ So Keim, *Jesus of Nazara*, vol. i. p. 314; Scholten.

² οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθὴς ἐστὼν ἡ μαρτυρία αὐτοῦ (John xxi. 24).

³ On the other hand, Meyer observes: "No satisfactory reason is apparent for recognising in οἶδαμεν a composer different from the γράψας."—*Gospel of John*, vol. ii. p. 411, translation. So also Michaelis remarks: "The phrase 'we know that his testimony is true' is the same as every Christian knows that his testimony is true."—Marsh's *Michaelis*, vol. iv. p. 319.

there the singular is employed, "He knoweth that he saith true;" but here it is the plural, "We know that his testimony is true." The probability is that it was appended after the death of John,¹ as it occurs immediately after the mention of the mistaken notion that that Apostle should never die. The most plausible account of it is that it is] the attestation of the Church of Ephesus, or of the elders of that Church, to the genuineness of the Gospel;² perhaps written first on the margin, and afterwards incorporated into the text. And if this be the case, then we have in these words a demonstration that the Gospel was written by John, this being attested by the authority of that community of Christians among whom he spent his latter days.

Owing to this Gospel, as most of its defenders assert, being written at a late period of the Apostolic age, we can hardly expect any distinct references to it in the works of the Apostolic Fathers. The Epistle of Clement (A.D. 96) was nearly contemporaneous with it. Some assert that there are reminiscences of it in the *Didaché* or the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (A.D. 100?). Thus Dr. Schaff observes: "There are remarkable resemblances between the two, which cannot be accidental. The resemblance is strongest between the eucharistic prayers and the sacerdotal prayer of our Lord."³ God is addressed as "Holy Father;" thanksgiving is rendered for life, and knowledge, and immortality, made known to us through Jesus Christ; Christ

¹ Godet and Luthardt, after Meyer, conclude that the Apostle was still alive, as he is referred to as *μαρτυρῶν*—one who is still bearing testimony.

² So Lücke, Bleek, Tholuck, Luthardt, Godet.

³ Schaff, *The Oldest Church Manual*, p. 89.

is called the True Vine; and prayer is offered up that the Church might be perfected in love.¹ But these and other instances adduced can hardly be regarded as allusions to the Gospel; the utmost that they prove is the presence of a Johannine spirit in the early Church.

Many suppose that there are allusions or references to this Gospel in the so-called Epistle of Barnabas (A.D. 110–120?). This is admitted by Keim. “The inner sphere of thought of this Epistle” (of Barnabas), he observes, “corresponds with the Gospel in so many ways, both in general features and in details, that scientific criticism is compelled to infer a connection, or to renounce its vocation by leaving the enigma unexplained.”² Accordingly, numerous resemblances to the Gospel are adduced from this Epistle,³ the most striking being the allusion to the serpent lifted up in the wilderness as a type of Christ;⁴ but all the instances adduced are too vague to be founded upon.

It is different with the Epistles of Ignatius (A.D. 115). These Epistles have been the subject of much controversy. They exist in two recensions, the larger and the smaller or Vossian recension. Cureton discovered a Syriac manuscript containing only three Epistles, and these in a more abridged form than in the smaller recen-

¹ *Didaché*, chap. x. 1, ix. 2, 3.

² Keim's *Jesus of Nazara*, vol. i. p. 192.

³ Dr. Charteris, in his *Canonicity*, pp. 168–170, adduces no fewer than nineteen supposed resemblances between this Epistle and John's Gospel.

⁴ Barnabas, *Epist.* xii. 5. On this Kirchhofer remarks: “Barnabas represents the brazen serpent as a type of Jesus. Some would find therein a reference to John iii. 14; but it is not to be denied that this cannot be maintained with certainty, as the author might make the application independently, or obtain it from oral tradition.”—*Quellensammlung*, p. 147.

sion.¹ The most probable opinion is, that the seven Epistles found in the smaller recension are genuine, though perhaps containing several interpolations, and that the Curetonian recension is an abridgment.² Now, in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans, the best attested of all his Epistles, we have the following words, found in the smaller and also in the Curetonian recension:³ “I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became afterwards of the seed of David and Abraham. And I desire the drink of God, the blood of Him who is undying love and eternal life”⁴ (comp. John vi. 33, 48, 54). Here we have most probably a reference to the discourse of our Lord concerning eating His flesh and drinking His blood.⁵

The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians (A.D. 116) was written shortly after the martyrdom of Ignatius, and its genuineness is attested by his disciple Irenæus: “There is also a powerful Epistle of Polycarp, written to the Philippians, from which those who chose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith and the preaching of the truth.”⁶ Now, Polycarp, in his Epistle, evidently refers to the First Epistle of John when he says, “For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh

¹ Cureton's *Corpus Ignatianum*.

² The reader is referred to Bishop Lightfoot's learned and exhaustive work, *Apostolic Fathers: St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp*. See also Zahn's *Ignatius von Antioch*, and two articles by the writer on *Ignatius and his Epistles* in the *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* for 1887.

³ *Corpus Ignatianum*, p. 231.

⁴ *Ad Rom.*, chap. vii.

⁵ Echoes of the Fourth Gospel in the Ignatian Epistles are admitted by Hilgenfeld and Volkmar.

⁶ Irenæus, *Adv. Her.*, iii. 3, 4.

is Antichrist" (1 John iv. 3).¹ Though disputed by a few,² yet it is almost universally admitted, from a consideration of the identity of ideas and style, that the First Epistle of John and the Fourth Gospel were by the same author. We have then the testimony of Polycarp in proof of the genuineness of John's Gospel, and this testimony is of great importance, as Polycarp was the disciple of John.

Papias (A.D. 120), another of the Apostolic Fathers, made much use, as Eusebius informs us, of John's First Epistle.³ And in a Latin manuscript of the Gospels of the ninth century, that of John is preceded by a preface wherein it is said: "John's Gospel was published and sent to the Churches by John during his lifetime, as Papias of Hierapolis, the beloved disciple of John, has related in his five exoteric (exegetic?), that is to say, last books," &c.⁴ Papias was a voluminous writer, but of his writings only small fragments remain. It has been objected that the silence of Eusebius, when quoting the opinion of Papias concerning John's Gospel, is an argument against its authenticity; but, as Bishop Lightfoot has well shown, the design of Eusebius was not to relate all that he knew of the Scriptural writings, but merely to record the testimonies in favour of the disputed books, and of the undisputed books only to mention them when some writer had something important to say concerning them.⁵

¹ *Ad Philippens.*, chap. vii.

² Disputed by Baur, Zeller, Volkmar, and Pfléiderer.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39.

⁴ Godet's *St. John*, vol. i. p. 214.

⁵ Lightfoot's *Essays on Supernatural Religion*: Essay ii. "The Silence of Eusebius."

Irenæus gives a quotation from those whom he calls elders or presbyters (A.D. 130), in which there is an evident reference to John's Gospel. "They (the presbyters) say that there is a distinction between the habitation of those who produce a hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty-fold; for the first will be taken up into the heavens, the second will dwell in paradise, and the last will inhabit the city; and that it was on this account the Lord declared, 'In My Father's house are many mansions'"¹ (John xiv. 2). By the elders or presbyters Irenæus probably meant those who, like Polycarp and Papias, had conversed with the Apostles of Christ; at least, he attributes to them an antiquity before his time.

Justin Martyr (A.D. 147)² is perhaps the most important authority among the Fathers for the genuineness of John's Gospel, both on account of his proximity in time to the Apostle, and, notwithstanding the assertion of some critics, the distinctness of his references. Of his works three remain—the two Apologies addressed to Antoninus Pius, and his Dialogue with Trypho the Jew. In these works he makes frequent mention of the Memoirs or Memorabilia of the Apostles; and he informs us that these Memoirs were read in church on the Lord's day, along with the writings of the prophets, so that they were regarded as sacred books. "On the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place, and the Memoirs of the Apostles

¹ Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, v. 36, 2.

² The approximate date of his greater *Apology*.

or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits.”¹ The Synoptic Gospels are undoubtedly included by Justin among the Memoirs of the Apostles, but whether the Fourth Gospel is also included has been questioned. The following references to this Gospel are, however, clear and unmistakable :—“ Christ has said, Except ye be born again, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but that it is impossible that those who have once been born should enter into the womb of those who bore them, is evident to all.”² “ The positive reasons,” as Dr. Ezra Abbot remarks, “ for believing that Justin derived his quotation from this source (the Fourth Gospel) are—(1) the fact that in no other report of the teaching of Christ, except that of John, do we find this figure of the new birth ; (2) the insistence in both Justin and John on the necessity of the new birth to the entrance into the kingdom of heaven ; (3) its mention in both in connection with baptism ; (4) and last and most important of all, the fact that Justin’s remark on the impossibility of a second natural birth is such a platitude, in the form in which he presents it, that we cannot regard it as original.”³ In his Dialogue with Trypho, Justin cites as the words of the Baptist, “ I am not the Christ, but the voice of one crying ;”⁴ which declaration of the Baptist is found only in John’s Gospel (John i. 20, 23). Justin frequently refers to Christ as the Word of God,

¹ *Apol.*, i. c. 67.

² *Apol.*, i. c. 61. Καὶ γὰρ ὁ Χριστὸς εἶπεν· ἂν μὴ ἀναγεννηθῇτε οὐ μὴ εἰσελθῇτε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν, ὅτι δὲ καὶ ἀδύνατον εἰς τὰς μήτρας τῶν τεκουσῶν τοὺς ἅπασι γεννωμένους ἐμβῆναι, φανερὸν πᾶσιν ἐστι (John iii. 4, 5).

³ Abbot, *The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 41.

⁴ *Dial.*, chap. 88.

an idea which it is highly probable he must have taken from John's Gospel, as Justin's view of the Logos bears a greater resemblance to it than to the philosophy of Philo. He refers to the incarnation of the Logos, an idea foreign to Philo, and states his view in expressions which bear a striking resemblance to those contained in the Fourth Gospel: "And his Son, who alone is properly called Son, the Word, who was also with Him, and was begotten before the works, when at first He created and arranged all things by Him, is called Christ, in reference to His being anointed and God's ordering all things through Him."¹ Indeed, Justin's use of the Fourth Gospel is now generally admitted. Hilgenfeld, the greatest living representative of the Tübingen school, admits it,² and so do Keim³ and Thoma.⁴ Dr. Samuel Davidson⁵ and Renan⁶ are the only critics of any eminence who still call it in question.

¹ *Apol.*, ii. c. 6. For a full discussion of the references of Justin to St. John's Gospel, see Dr. Ezra Abbot's work on the *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*. He concludes his examination in the following terms: "We are authorised to regard it as in the highest degree probable, if not morally certain, that in the time of Justin Martyr the Fourth Gospel was generally received as the work of the Apostle John" (p. 80). See also a very valuable work by Dr. Purves of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, entitled *The Testimony of Justin Martyr to Early Christianity*, pp. 213-231.

² Hilgenfeld's *Einleitung in das N. T.*, p. 66.

³ Keim's *Jesus of Nazara*, vol. i. p. 189.

⁴ Thoma, *Die Genesis des Johannes Evangelium*, p. 824. According to him, Justin did not use the Gospel as a book sanctioned by the Church, or of authoritative value. So also Holtzmann.

⁵ Davidson's *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 381, 1st edit., vol. ii. p. 347, 2nd edit., where he still affirms: "The result of our inquiry into Justin's writings is that his use of the Fourth Gospel is not proved."

⁶ Renan, *The Christian Church*, p. 31, translation. Renan, however, admits that the Fourth Gospel is more than a quarter of a century older than Justin's *Apology*.

Tatian (A.D. 160?) is another important witness in favour of the authenticity of John's Gospel. He was a disciple of Justin, but afterwards adopted the opinions of the Encratites, a Gnostic sect. In his *Apology*, or *Address to the Greeks*, he quotes the words of the *Epistle and Gospel of John* as well known: "This is in fact that which hath been said, The darkness comprehendeth not the light"¹ (John i. 5). "God is a Spirit"² (John iv. 24). And again: "Do not abhor us who have made this attainment, but, repudiating the demons, follow one God. All things were made by Him, and without Him not one thing was made"³ (John i. 3). But the most striking testimony of Tatian is from the *Diatessaron*. We are informed that Tatian wrote a harmony of the Gospels called the *Diatessaron*, in which the genealogies were omitted, and which commenced with the words, "In the beginning was the Word." To this harmony Eusebius refers when he says, "Tatian having formed a certain collection of the Gospels, I know not how, has given this the title *Diatessaron*, that is, the Gospel of the Four; which is in possession of some even now."⁴ This harmony of the Gospels was in such repute that Theodoret, in the fifth century, informs us that he found in his diocese more than two hundred copies of it.⁵ Dionysius Bar-Salibi, who lived in the twelfth century, tells us that the celebrated Father Ephraem Syrus wrote a commentary on it.⁶ Its existence was called in question by the opponents of the

¹ Tatian, *Orat. c. Græc.*, chap. xiii.

² *Idem*, chap. iv.

³ *Idem*, chap. xix.

⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iv. 29.

⁵ Theodoret, *Har. Fab.*, i. 20.

⁶ Assemani, *Biblioth. Orient.*, ii. p. 158 ff.

Johannine authorship of the Fourth Gospel; but only recently the commentary of Ephraem has been discovered in an Armenian version at Venice, agreeing with what we know of Tatian's harmony, commencing with the first verse of the Fourth Gospel and omitting the genealogies, thus proving beyond all doubt that the Gospel of John was included in it.¹ And still more recently two other manuscripts were discovered by Professor Ciasca of Rome in the Vatican; the one an Arabic translation of the Diatessaron itself, and the other an Arabic translation of a Syriac original of the Diatessaron, corresponding precisely to that used by Ephraem.² This not only proves that John's Gospel was in existence in the time of Tatian, but that it must have existed for a considerable time, in order to account for its recognition by the early Church as the genuine work of the Apostle John.

A complete manuscript of the Clementine Homilies (A.D. 160) was found in the Vatican Library by Dressel in 1837, and published in Göttingen in 1853. In the rediscovered portion there is the following undoubted reference to John's Gospel: "Our Teacher, when we inquired of Him in regard to the man who was blind from his birth and recovered his sight, if this man sinned or his parents, that he should be born blind, answered 'Neither did he sin at all nor his parents, but that the power of God might be manifest through him

¹ The Armenian text was printed in Venice in 1836, and a Latin translation of it was published in 1876. See, on the discovery of Ephraem's Commentary on Tatian's Diatessaron, two interesting articles by Professor Wace in the *Expositor* for 1882, and Zahn's *Tatian's Diatessaron*, p. 240 ff.

² See Purves's *Testimony of Justin to Early Christianity*, p. 236.

in healing the sins of ignorance”¹ (John ix. 47). Formerly it was denied that there was any use of John’s Gospel in the Clementine Homilies, but it is now in general freely admitted. “The author of the Clementine Homilies,” observes Keim, “after long opposition, has been admitted to have been acquainted with this Gospel.”² And so also Hilgenfeld has retracted his denial.³

Melito, Bishop of Sardis (A.D. 170), was one of the most voluminous writers among the ancient Fathers; but only a few fragments of his writings have survived. In one of these fragments we have the following words: “For being God, and at the same time perfect man, He Himself displayed to us His two natures; His deity by the signs during the three years after the baptism, and His humanity during the thirty years before His baptism.”⁴ In the Gospel of Luke we are informed that Jesus commenced His ministry when He was thirty years of age; but it is only from the Gospel of John that we learn that His ministry extended over three years.

Contemporary with Melito was Apollinaris of Hierapolis (A.D. 171), who has the following allusion to the Gospel of John in his treatise on the Paschal festival: “The same (the Son of God) was pierced in His holy side: the same that poured forth again the two purifying elements, water and blood.”⁵

The next testimony is the Muratorian Canon. This

¹ *Hom.* xix. 22.

² Keim’s *Jesus of Nazara*, p. 187.

³ Hilgenfeld, *Einleitung in das N. T.*, pp. 43, 44, note.

⁴ See Luthardt, *St. John the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 49; Weiss, *Einleitung in das N. T.*, p. 49.

⁵ *Chron. Pasch.*, Bonn edit., p. 12.

celebrated fragment, mutilated both at the beginning and at the end, was discovered in the Ambrosian Library in Milan, and was first published by Muratori in 1740. It professes to have been written by a contemporary of Pius I., Bishop of Rome, and is therefore to be placed about the year A.D. 170. Its genuineness has been generally acknowledged.¹ In it we have the following legendary account of John's Gospel: "The fourth place is given to the Gospel of John, a disciple of the Lord. At the entreaties of his fellow-disciples, John said, Fast with me three days, and whatever shall be revealed to each of us, let us relate it to one another. On the same night it was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that, all giving their sanction, John should relate all things in his own name."² We have nothing to do with the fabulous nature of the narrative; all that we have to do with is the clear recognition of the existence of John's Gospel at this period in the Western Church.

Celsus (A.D. 170), against whom Origen wrote his celebrated defence of Christianity, lived, as that Father tells us, a considerable time before him.² In his objections to Christianity he makes use of John's Gospel. Thus he alludes to the blood which flowed from Christ's side when he asks, "What is the nature of the blood in the body of the crucified Jesus?"³ (John xix. 34, 35). And again he observes, "Jesus while alive was of no assistance to Himself, but that He rose after death

¹ It is a manuscript of the seventh century, in very corrupt Latin, but is supposed to be a translation from the Greek. A transcript of it is given by Westcott in his *Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 466-480; by Charteris in his *Canonicity*, pp. 3-8; and by Tregelles in his *Canon Muratorianus*, with a facsimile of the MS. from the Ambrosian Library at Milan.

² Origen, *Contra Cels.*, i. 8.

³ *Idem*, ii. 36.

and exhibited the marks of His punishment, and showed how His hands had been pierced by nails"¹ (John xx. 25, 27).

Athenagoras (A.D. 176), in his Apology addressed to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus, speaks of God as having created the world through the Logos, the Son as being in the Father, and the Father in the Son, and the Father and the Son as being one,² all which expressions prove an acquaintance with John's Gospel.

In the Epistle of the Churches of Lyons and Vienne (A.D. 177), giving an account of the severe persecution they endured in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, there is the following distinct reference to the Fourth Gospel: "Then was fulfilled the declaration of our Lord, that the day would come when every one that slayeth you will think that he doeth God a service"³ (John xvi. 2).

Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch (A.D. 177), in his defence of Christianity addressed to Autolycus, is the first Father who expressly attributes the Fourth Gospel to John: "And hence the Holy Scripture teaches us, as well as all who are moved with the Holy Ghost, among whom John says, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, showing that at first God was alone and the Word in Him."⁴

Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus (A.D. 178), speaks of John as "the disciple who rested on the bosom of our Lord,"⁵ an evident reference to the incident related in John's Gospel at the Last Supper.

¹ Origen, *Contra Cels.*, ii. 59.

² Athenagoras, *Legat. pro Christ.*, chap. x.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 1.

⁴ Theophilus, *Ad Autolyc.*, ii. 22.

⁵ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 31.

One of the most important witnesses for John's Gospel is Irenæus (A.D. 180). This Father was the disciple of Polycarp, who was the disciple of John; and therefore he must have been thoroughly acquainted with the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. Now it is a fact that has never been disputed that Irenæus attributes this Gospel to the Apostle John. On this point there can be no controversy. Tischendorf informs us that there are in the works of Irenæus no less than eighty direct quotations from John's Gospel.¹ Let the two following suffice: "John relates His original, effectual, and glorious generation from the Father, thus declaring, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."² "Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leant upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence in Asia."³

But besides these quotations from the writings of the Fathers, we have the evidence of the early versions of the New Testament. Of these versions, the most important for our purpose are the Syriac and the Latin, and both these versions contain the Gospel of John. The Syriac, whether in the form of the Peshito, or in a version still earlier, of which remains have been discovered,⁴ was in existence in the second century, and was probably made in the first half of that cen-

¹ Tischendorf, *Wann wurden unsere Evangelien verfasst*, p. 49. English translation.

² Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 11, 8.

³ *Idem*, iii. 1, 1.

⁴ Cureton in 1858 published a Syriac manuscript containing fragments of the Gospels, and this is supposed to be from an older version than the Peshito.

ture.¹ The Latin, or the so-called *Vetus Latina*, was probably of African origin. Tertullian alludes to it, and gives citations from it, so that it must have existed before his time. It has been referred by competent critics to A.D. 170.

But it is not only from the writings of the early Fathers and from these early versions that we learn the genuineness of John's Gospel, but also from the writings of the early heretics. The important discovery at Mount Athos in 1842 of the *Philosophoumena*, or *The Refutation of all Heresies*, now ascribed to Hippolytus,² which contains references of the early Gnostics to the books of the New Testament, has enlarged this source of evidence. Basilides (A.D. 125), one of the earliest of the Gnostic writers, and who wrote only thirty years after the death of John,³ made use of John's Gospel. Hippolytus tells us that Basilides used expressions occurring in the Gospels. "That was the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John i. 9);⁴ and "Mine hour is not yet come" (John ii. 4).⁵ It has, indeed, been asserted that Hippolytus does not quote directly from Basilides, but gives

¹ "There is no sufficient reason," observes Westcott, "to desert the opinion, which has obtained the sanction of the most competent scholars, that its formation is to be fixed within the first half of the second century."—Westcott *On the Canon*, p. 211.

² The *Philosophoumena* was discovered in a convent at Mount Athos in 1842; and printed by the Clarendon press in 1851. It appeared under the title *Origen's Philosophoumena*. The consensus of opinion is in favour of the authorship of Hippolytus.

³ This early date of the works of Basilides is generally admitted. See Davidson's *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 351, 2nd edit.

⁴ Hippolytus, *Refut. Hær.*, vii. 10.

⁵ *Idem*, vii. 15.

the words of his disciples ; but there is no ground for this assertion, as he introduces the quotations of Basilides by the words, "he says," not "they say;" so that Keim admits : "The facts remain sufficiently clear that the Fourth Gospel actually existed in the time of Basilides, and that the Gnostics, masters and scholars, eagerly laid hold of that book."¹

Irenæus expressly informs us that the Valentinians made copious use of John's Gospel to illustrate their peculiar doctrines.² Indeed, Heracleon, a disciple of Valentinian, wrote a commentary on the Gospel of John.³ But not only did the Valentinians quote from John's Gospel, but also Valentinus (A.D. 140) himself. Hippolytus quotes several sayings of our Lord recorded by John which were adopted by Valentinus. "Valentinus," he observes, "says all the prophets and the law spoke by means of the Demiurgus, a foolish god who knew nothing. On account of this the Saviour observes, 'All that came before me are thieves and robbers'" (John x. 8).⁴ Here also there is no reason to attribute these words to the disciples of Valentinus.

Marcion (A.D. 140) was the founder of the sect of Gnostics, who were opposed to the Jewish law. He regarded Judaism as antagonistic to Christianity, and hence rejected all the books of the New Testament, with the exception of the Gospel of Luke and some of the Epistles

¹ Keim's *Jesus of Nazara*, vol. i. p. 196. In 1875, in the third edition of his *Jesus von Nazara*, Keim retracted this, and regarded the Fourth Gospel as containing a polemic against Basilides.

² Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 11, 7.

³ Fragments of it have been preserved by Origen.

⁴ Hippolytus, *Refut. Hær.*, vi. 30.

of Paul. Tertullian informs us that he was cognisant of the Gospel of John and rejected it, not on account of its spuriousness, but because it was opposed to his views. "If you (Marcion) had not purposely rejected in some instances and corrupted in others the Scriptures which are opposed to your opinion, you would have been confuted in this matter by the Gospel of John, where it declares that the Holy Spirit descended in the body of a dove and sat upon the Lord."¹

Montanus (A.D. 140) evidently derives his peculiar views concerning the Paraclete from the declarations in John's Gospel concerning the Comforter. He was indeed far from being tainted with the Gnostic heresy, and is rather to be regarded as the father of the mystics; but still he was classed among the heretics by the early Church.

"The use of the Gospel of John by the Gnostic sects in the second century," observes Dr. Ezra Abbot, "affords a strong, it may seem decisive, argument for its genuineness. However ingeniously they may pervert its meaning, it is obvious to every intelligent reader that this Gospel is in reality diametrically opposed to the essential principles of Gnosticism. The Christian fathers, in their contests with the Gnostics, found it an armory of weapons. Such being the case, let us suppose it to have been forged about the middle of the second century, in the heat of the Gnostic controversy. It was thus a book which the founders of the Gnostic sects, who flourished ten, twenty, or thirty years before, had never heard of. How is it possible,

¹ Tertullian, *De Carne Christi*, chap. iii.

then, to explain the fact that their followers should not only have received it, but have received it, so far as appears, without question or discussion? It must have been received by the founders of these sects from the beginning; and we have no reason to distrust the testimony of Hippolytus to what is, under these circumstances, so probable, and is attested by other evidence. But if received by the founders of these sects, it must have been received at the same time by the Catholic Christians. They would not at a later period have taken the spurious work from the heretics with whom they were in controversy. It was, then, generally received both by Gnostics and their opponents between the years 120 and 130. . . . The fact of the reception of the Fourth Gospel as his (John's) work at so early a date by parties so violently opposed to each other, proves that the evidence of its genuineness was decisive." ¹

Such is the external evidence in favour of the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel. We have considered the subject at considerable length on account of its importance. It is an undoubted fact that this Gospel was regarded as the work of John by the whole Christian Church toward the close of the second century. We have discovered traces of it from that time up to the second decade of the second century. It is true that the name of John is not expressly mentioned until later; but if it is referred to shortly after the time when it was written, it must have been recognised as his work; those living at that period could not have

¹ Abbot's *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 88, 89.

been ignorant of its authorship. Besides, there is the attestation attached to the Gospel itself. We must also remember that toward the close of the second century this Gospel was recognised, not by this or that Father, but by the whole Christian Church, and a considerable time must be allowed for the growth of this universal recognition.¹

Nor are the internal evidences in favour of John's authorship without weight.

1. The author of the Gospel was a Jew. The language in which it is written is, if we might use the expression, Hebraising Greek; the external form is Greek, but the spirit is Hebrew. It is true that there is a certain degree of purity in the Greek, but there is a sufficient number of expressions and idioms to prove that the writer must have been a Jew.² "The Greek," observes Dr. Sanday, "is purer than that of the Synop-
 J The Hebraism comes out less in the vocabulary than in the construction of the sentences, the fondness for parallel clauses, the frequent repetition of the same

¹ "About the end of the second century," observes Professor Norton, "the Gospels were revered as sacred books by a community dispersed over the world, composed of men of different nations and languages. There were, to say the least, sixty thousand copies of them in existence; they were read in the churches of Christians; they were continually quoted and appealed to as of the highest authority; their reputation was as well established among believers from one end of the Roman Empire to the other, as it is at the present day among Christians in any country. . . . The general reception of the Gospels as books of the highest authority, at the end of the second century, necessarily implies their celebrity at a much earlier period, and the long-continued operation of causes sufficient to produce so remarkable a phenomenon."—Norton, *The Genuineness of the Gospels*, vol. i. p. 123.

² As Godet puts it, "The clothing is Greek, but the body is Hebrew."

thought, with slight modification of sense or form, the simple modes of conjunction, the absence of complicated periods."¹ The author has also a thorough acquaintance with the Old Testament, such as could not be obtained by a converted Gentile in those days. The quotations which he makes are numerous, and are both from the original and the Septuagint, showing his acquaintance with the Hebrew.² The author is thoroughly acquainted with Jewish usages, as the Jewish notion of a Sabbath-day's journey, the Jewish feasts, not only the great festivals, but the minor ones, as the Maccabean feast at the dedication of the Temple, the Jewish ceremonies at these feasts, the Jewish customs of burial and embalming, the Jewish law of evidence. He is perfectly familiar with Jewish opinions, as the Jewish expectations of a Messiah, the antagonism between Jews and Samaritans, the supercilious contempt of the Pharisees for the people, the dread of ceremonial defilement, the belief in the transmitted punishment of sin. He is also familiar with the laws and practices of the times; as that the Romans had deprived the Jews of the power of life and death, that blasphemy was according to the Jewish law punishable with death, and that the Roman procurator was accustomed to be at Jerusalem at the Passover.³

2. But the author of the Gospel was not only a Jew, but a Jew of Palestine. He is minutely acquainted with the topography of the Holy Land. He mentions

¹ Sanday, *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 28.

² The quotations in John xii. 40, xiii. 18, xix. 37, are taken from the Hebrew.

³ For further particulars on this point, see Sanday on the *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 286-290.

Cana of Galilee, thus distinguishing it from Cana of Phenicia, formerly belonging to the tribe of Asher; Bethsaida as the city of Andrew and Peter, thus distinguishing it from Bethsaida Julias, in the tetrarchy of Philip; Sychar, probably a village, in the neighbourhood of which was Jacob's well.¹ He speaks of Bethany as about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, and, according to the best authenticated reading, of another otherwise unknown Bethany on the other side of Jordan (John i. 28), and of other obscure places, as Ephraim (John xi. 54), Ænon, and Salim (John iii. 23), which could only be known by one minutely acquainted with the country. He knows thoroughly the localities of Jerusalem and of the Temple, as, for example, the pool of Bethesda by the sheep gate, with its five porches; the pool of Siloam; Solomon's porch, and the treasury in the Temple; the brook Kedron; the place of a skull, called Golgotha; and Joseph's sepulchre in the garden.

3. Internal evidences show that the author was an eye-witness of most of the facts which he relates. This is expressly stated in the Gospel itself. Thus in the commencement the author states that the glory of Christ was a matter of personal observation: "We beheld His glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). When recording a remarkable fact that occurred at the crucifixion, he adds, "He that saw it bare record, and his record is true" (John xix. 35). And in the First Epistle, generally admitted to have been written by the same person, he says, "That which was from the begin-

¹ Supposed to be the village of Askar, about a mile from Shechem.

ning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life, declare we unto you" (1 John i. 1). And in the Gospel there are evident proofs that it was written by an eye-witness. There are frequent statements of time that such an event happened about the tenth hour; that the next day John stood and two of his disciples; that it was the sixth hour when Jesus sat at Jacob's well; that it was the preparation and about the sixth hour (John i. 39, 35; iv. 6; xix. 14). There are graphic and lifelike descriptions of persons, as Nathanael, an Israelite without guile; Peter, full of zeal and always in the front; and Thomas, eager to sacrifice his life for his Master, and yet doubting the reality of His resurrection. There are narratives of scenes and events which bear impressed upon them the evidence that the person who narrates them was present, as, for example, the marriage at Cana of Galilee, the feeding of the multitude, the cure of the man who was born blind, the raising of Lazarus, the anointing of our Lord's feet by Mary of Bethany, the last discourses of our Lord in the upper chamber, the details of the crucifixion, and the visit of the two disciples to the sepulchre. All these and numerous other incidents prove that the person who wrote the Gospel must have been present when the incidents occurred which are related. Fiction may depict imaginary scenes, but no fiction could ever attain to such lifelike descriptions and to such incidental marks of reality as are contained in the Fourth Gospel.

4. But although the author was a Palestinian Jew

and an eye-witness, yet there are evidences that when he wrote he was at a distance, both in place and time, from the scenes which he records. He does not write to those who, like himself, were acquainted with Jewish rites and customs ; he writes at a distance from Jerusalem, and to foreigners. He frequently has to add explanations to many of the statements which he makes. Thus he speaks of Caiaphas as being the high priest for that year ; of "Master" as the interpretation of the Hebrew word Rabbi ; of the pool of Siloam, which is by interpretation Sent ; of the place that is called the pavement, but in the Hebrew Gabbatha ; of the place of the skull, called in the Hebrew Golgotha. He states that the pool by the sheep-market was called in the Hebrew Bethesda, and that Nicodemus and Joseph took the body of Jesus and prepared it for burial, as the manner of the Jews was to bury. In like manner the impression is left upon us, from various incidental expressions, that a considerable time had elapsed since the occurrence of the events related. Christianity had made considerable progress before this Gospel was written. The universality of Christianity, in contrast to its limitation to the Jews, is prominently brought forward, as when our Lord says, "God so loved the world ;" "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold ;" "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

5. All these marks point to the Apostle John. He was a Jew by birth, versed in the Old Testament, familiar with Jewish customs, thoroughly acquainted with the topography both of Palestine and of Jerusalem.

He was an eye-witness of the incidents in the life of our Lord, and, as we are informed by the Fathers, he wrote his Gospel at a distance from Jerusalem, and several years after the occurrence of the events which he narrates. The author of the Gospel was an intimate follower of Christ. He was acquainted with our Lord's constant disciples, whom he calls by their names; he was admitted into intimate communion with Christ, and was a listener to His familiar discourses. He relates the words of our Lord, and the questions put to Him by His disciples. Now, according to the Synoptists, the three most intimate followers of our Lord were Peter, James, and John, and among them we are to seek for the author of the Fourth Gospel. He could not be Peter, for he is in several places expressly distinguished from the author, "the disciple whom Jesus loved;" nor could he be James, for he perished in the early years of Christianity. Hence all internal evidences point to John, one of the most prominent of the Apostles, the friend of Peter, and designated by Paul as a pillar of the Church.

II.—OBJECTIONS TO ITS AUTHENTICITY.

In the early Church only the Alogi, an obscure sect of heretics mentioned by Epiphanius,¹ called in question the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel, and that from purely dogmatic reasons. "They denied," he observes, "the Gospel according to John, and the Logos who was in Him in the beginning, and who was

¹ Epiphanius, *Adv. Her.*, ii. 51.

God." And he informs us that they ascribed both the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse to Cerinthus. The name was given to this sect by Epiphanius because they were deniers of the Logos, and with an allusion to the unreasonableness of their views (*ἄλογος* = unreasonable). "I shall be right in naming them Alogi, since they reject the Logos of God, the paternal divine Logos, that came down from heaven, whom John preached." They appear to have been a rationalistic sect, who arose in the latter half of the second century, as a reaction against Montanism, denied the personality of the Spirit, and in the Trinitarian controversies of the third century belonged to the Monarchian party. In all probability they are the same as those heretics of whom Irenæus speaks, but without mentioning their name, as rejecting the Gospel of John: "Others, that they may set at nought the gift of the Spirit, which in latter times has been, by the good pleasure of the Father, poured out upon the human race, do not admit that aspect in which, according to John's Gospel, the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete; but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit;"¹ inasmuch as Epiphanius tells us that the Alogi not only denied the Logos, but did not receive the Spirit. It should also be observed that while the Alogi denied the Johannine authorship of the Gospel, they still bear witness to its great antiquity by ascribing it to Cerinthus, a contemporary of the Apostle. The Marcionites also rejected the Gospel of John; but, as we have already had occasion to observe, they did this not from any

¹ Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 11, 9.

doubts which they entertained concerning its genuineness, but because they considered it opposed to their anti-Jewish views.

The Johannine controversy is of comparatively recent date. With the exception of the heretical sects just mentioned, the authenticity of John's Gospel was never seriously questioned until near the close of last century. There are no traces of early doubt in the writings of the Fathers; and even in the times of the Reformation, when a critical spirit was abroad, the genuineness of this Gospel remained unquestioned. But toward the close of last century the attacks commenced in earnest, and have been continued almost without intermission until the present time. This Johannine controversy has given rise to an enormous literature, which is not yet exhausted. The first who urged any reasonable objection was Evanson, at one time a clergyman of the Church of England, who in 1792 impugned the authority of this Gospel in his work entitled *The Dissonance of the Four generally received Gospels*.¹ The reasons which he assigned for rejecting the Gospel of John were the supposed discrepancies between it and the three first Gospels. He was followed in Germany by several theologians, as Eckermann² in 1796, Vogel³ in 1801, Cludius⁴ in 1808, and Ballenstedt⁵ in 1812; but it was not until

¹ Evanson was an Anglican divine in Gloucester. His work was answered by Priestley, *Letters to a Young Man*, 1793, and by the Rev. Thomas Falconer in the Bampton Lectures for 1811.

² *Theologische Beiträge*.

³ *Der Evangelist Johannes und seine Ausleger vor dem jüngsten Gericht*.

⁴ *Ursichten des Christenthums nebst Untersuchungen über einige Bücher des N. T.* Altona, 1808.

⁵ *Philo und Johannes*.

1820 that the controversy assumed importance. In this year Bretschneider published his *Probabilia de Evangelio et Epistolarum Joannis Apostoli indole et origine*. In this work he collected all the objections which others had brought against this Gospel, and anticipated most of those subsequently urged.¹ He especially insisted on the great differences between this Gospel and the other three, not only in the events recorded, but especially in the nature of the discourses related. According to him, the whole style and type of Christ's teaching was different; whilst the other narratives contained a plain narrative of the life and teaching of Christ, the Fourth Gospel gave a philosophical turn to His discourses. The author, he concludes, could not be the uneducated Galilean Apostle whose name it bears, but was in all probability a Christian of Alexandria who wrote in the middle of the second century. This learned work of Bretschneider called forth numerous replies; and shortly afterwards a reaction took place in favour of John's Gospel, proceeding from Schleiermacher and his school, so that the controversy was for a decade almost entirely confined to the positive side. Bretschneider partially retracted his views, and stated that he had attained the end which he had in view, which was to call forth a more complete demonstration of the authenticity of John's Gospel.²

In 1835 the controversy broke out afresh, and raged with renewed vigour. The occasion was the publication

¹ According to Weiss: "In all modern criticism of the Gospel there has hardly been one important suspicion advanced against its genuineness which Bretschneider did not discuss."

² Preface to the second edition of his *Dogmatik*, 1822.

of Strauss' celebrated *Leben Jesu*. Strauss was entirely destructive in his arguments, and resolved the Gospel into a series of myths. But the subject was taken up, in a far more scientific and profound manner, by Baur in 1844.¹ This celebrated theologian assigned a positive reason for John's Gospel, and maintained that it was written in advocacy of certain definite aims. The work was written at a time when the Church was agitated by the Gnostic heresies, by Montanism, by the Paschal controversy, and by philosophical views concerning the Logos; and traces of all these tendencies are to be found in the Gospel. According to this view, the period of composition is to be fixed about the middle of the second century. These views of Baur were ably advocated by several distinguished disciples. Schwegler² had even at an earlier period endeavoured to prove that the Gospel owed its origin to the theological movement of Montanism; Köstlin,³ Zeller, and Volkmar⁴ advocated views similar to those of Baur; and in the present day the Tübingen school is represented by Hilgenfeld, who, although he has considerably modified the opinions of Baur, yet considers that the Gospel was composed with a definite tendency of reconciliation.⁵ Numerous other theologians, who can hardly be said to belong to the Tübingen school, are opponents to the genuineness of

¹ Baur, *Krit. Untersuchungen über die kanon. Ev.*

² *Montanismus und die ch. Kirche des zweiten Jahrh.* Tübingen, 1841.

³ Köstlin's *Lehrbegriff des Evangeliums und der Briefe Johannis* appeared in 1843, a year before Baur's celebrated essays.

⁴ *Ursprung unsrer Evangelien*, 1866 Volkmar considered the Fourth Gospel as a polemic directed against Marcion.

⁵ *Das Ev. und die Briefe Joh.*, 1849; *Die Evv. nach ihrer Entstehung*, 1854; *Einleitung in das N. T.*, 1875.

John's Gospel; whilst they urge their objections against it, they do not feel called upon to assign any reason for its composition. The most noted among these are Holtzmann, Keim, Mangold,¹ Hase,² Pfleiderer, and Hausrath Schürer in Germany; and Dr. Samuel Davidson,³ the author of *Supernatural Religion*, and Dr. Abbott in his article on the Gospels in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

There is another class of opponents, who occupy a middle position. They do not, like the above, reject the Gospel as entirely spurious, but suppose that there is a considerable portion of truth in it; that it contains genuine traditions of John, notes of his discourses, or a correct statement of facts. Thus Weisse supposes that the discourses contained in the Gospel are an enlarged edition of a genuine Apostolic collection of the sayings of Jesus, whilst the narrative is interpolated;⁴ Schenkel considers that several of the discourses, especially our Lord's farewell discourse to His disciples, proceeded from John, whilst these discourses are joined together by a narrative from a later hand;⁵ and Schweizer considers that the narrative of events in Galilee is an interpolation, but that the rest of the Gospel, with some exceptions, is authentic.⁶ Weizsäcker

¹ Mangold, in his edition of Bleek's *Einleitung*, expresses his doubts concerning the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel.

² *Geschichte Jesu*, 1876. "It is not," he observes, "without a heavy heart that I have parted from faith in the full authenticity of the Johanneine writing."

³ *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, 1st edit., 1868; 2nd edit., 1882.

⁴ *Die evangelische Geschichte, kritisch und philosophisch bearbeitet*, 1838; *Die Evang. Frage in ihrem gegenwärtigen Stadium*. Leipzig, 1856.

⁵ *Ueber die neuesten Bearbeitungen des Lebens Jesu*, 1840; *Characterbild Jesu*, 1864.

⁶ *Das Ev. Joh. nach seinem inneren Werthe untersucht*, 1841.

thinks that the Gospel was composed by a disciple of John after the death of the Apostle, who based his work upon genuine Apostolic reminiscences.¹ Reuss considers that the authenticity of the Gospel is very doubtful, and that it may unhesitatingly be admitted that the John who appears in Gal. ii. did not write the Gospel, though he allows that a subsequent transformation of character, as was the case with Paul, might have taken place; a germ of more profound religiosity may have been implanted in a heart which needed only change of air and soil to bring it to maturity.² And Renan considers that the discourses are almost entirely fictitious; but the narrative parts contain valuable traditions, going back, in fact, to the Apostle John.³

Recent discoveries of ancient documents, as, for example, the full text of the Clementine Homilies, the Diatessaron of Tatian, and the Philosophoumena of Hippolytus, and a more rigid examination of the writings of the Fathers, especially Justin Martyr, and of the references to the Fourth Gospel in the early Gnostic writers, have caused the opponents of the authorship of John to shift their ground, and to attribute to that Gospel a more ancient date than they formerly assigned; they find that the assertions formerly made cannot, in the face of the progress of modern criticism, be now maintained. Thus Schwegeler and

¹ *Untersuchungen über die Evang. Gesch.*, 1864. See also his *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, pp. 531 ff.

² *Geschichte der heiligen Schriften N. T.*, p. 223; translation, p. 233.

³ Renan's *Life of Jesus*, Preface to the 13th edition, p. xv.; *The Christian Church*, pp. 25, 26. He supposes that the writer of these traditions may be the Presbyter John.

Baur had fixed the date A.D. 160–170; and Volkmar A.D. 155; Zeller and Scholten go back to A.D. 150. Hilgenfeld, constrained to admit the use of the Gospel by Justin Martyr, places it at A.D. 130; and Schenkel between the years A.D. 115 and A.D. 120. Keim in his *Jesus of Nazara* makes the following admission: "The external evidence proves that the Fourth Gospel had its origin in the beginning of the second century, without doubt under the Emperor Trajan (A.D. 100–107);"¹ though in the last edition of his history he returns to A.D. 130. And Renan observes: "There is one thing at least which I regard as very probable, and that is that the book was written before the year A.D. 100; that is to say, at a time when the Synoptics had not yet a complete canonicity."² But if a date has to be assigned so near the death of John, which, according to credible testimony, occurred at Ephesus about A.D. 96, the Churches of Proconsular Asia, among whom it is generally agreed that this Gospel was first published, could not possibly be imposed upon by a false author, when so many of the contemporaries of the Apostle must still have been alive;³ and consequently we are constrained to fall back upon the testimony of the Ephesian Church appended to the Gospel: "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true" (John xxi. 24).

The defenders of the authenticity of the Gospel

¹ *Geschichte Jesu von Nazara*, vol. i. p. 155, translation, vol. i. p. 211.

² *Life of Jesus*, translation, Introduction, p. xlv.

³ Keim gets over the difficulty by denying the Ephesian residence of John. See *ante*, 51.

have been very numerous, and among them are to be reckoned theologians of eminent ability and profound learning. The most eminent are Neander, Bleek, Schleiermacher, Lücke, Tholuck, Ebrard, Hengstenberg, Luthardt, Lechler, Meyer, Beyschlag, and B. Weiss in Germany; Godet in Switzerland; Pressensé in France; and in our own country, without disparagement to those whose names are omitted, may be mentioned Westcott in his *Commentary* and in his *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, Sanday in his *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel* and in his *Gospels of the Second Century*, Liddon in his *Bampton Lectures* on our Lord's Divinity, and Reynolds in his admirable introduction to St. John's Gospel in the *Pulpit Commentary*.¹ The work of Dr. Ezra Abbot of America on *the authorship of the Fourth Gospel* is an exhaustive and convincing statement of the external evidences.²

It is evident that the Johannine controversy is not yet terminated; it is still carried on almost as fiercely as ever, and with much ability and learning on both sides.³ Among the present opponents of the Gospel are to be reckoned Hilgenfeld, Holtzmann, Schenkel, Mangold, Reuss, Thoma, Abbott, Weiszäcker, Pfeiderer,

¹ It is greatly to be desired that this valuable and masterly introduction of Dr. Reynolds, extending over 161 closely printed pages, be published in a separate form. It is a valuable addition to Johannine literature.

² There is also to be mentioned an essay of great value by R. H. Hutton, *Essays, Theological and Literary*, vol. i., 2nd edit., Essay vii., "The Historical Problems of the Fourth Gospel." An admirable popular treatment of the question is contributed by Godet to the series of *Present Day Tracts*, vol. v., "The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel."

³ See Holtzmann's *Einleitung in das N. T.*, p. 423; "Die gegenwärtige Sachlage;" Schürer, *Ueber den gegenwärtigen Stand der johannischen Frage*.

Schürer, and Samuel Davidson; whilst among its present defenders are to be mentioned the equally distinguished theologians Bernhard Weiss, Beyschlag, Luthardt, Godet, Schaff, Franke, Zahn, Westcott, Sanday, and Lightfoot.¹ Still, however, considerable progress has been made toward the settlement of the question in favour of the Johannine authorship. The tendency-theory of the Tübingen school has been in general abandoned even by those who do not hold the genuineness of the Gospel, and the peculiar views of Baur may now be considered as antiquated. The date of the Gospel, as has already been observed, has been transferred near to the lifetime of John. The external evidences have been greatly strengthened by recent discoveries, and the difficulties connected with the internal evidences, although they may not be removed, yet have been greatly reduced and modified.²

It must be evident, from the most cursory perusal, that the Fourth Gospel is very different from the other three, or the so-called Synoptic Gospels. The scene of our Lord's ministry is different, being transferred from

¹ Since the above was written in manuscript, this great theologian has passed away.

² See a complete list of the literature of the disputed origin of St. John's Gospel from 1792 to 1875 by Dr. Caspar Gregory in an appendix to his translation of Luthardt's *St. John the Author of the Fourth Gospel*. Since then have been written, Albrecht Thoma's *Die Genesis des Johannes Evangelium*, 1882; Westcott's *Commentary on St. John in Speaker's Bible*, 1880; Moulton and Milligan's *Commentary in Schaff's Popular Commentary*, 1880; Dr. Ezra Abbot, *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, 1882; Abbott's article on the Gospels in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1879; Rev. H. Evans' *St. John the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, 1888; Sanday's *Gospels of the Second Century*, 1876; and Plummer on *St. John's Gospel*, 1886. To these have to be added the relative sections in the introductions of Holzmänn, Weiss, and Salmon; and in the *Apostolisches Zeitalter* of Weiszäcker.

Galilee to Judæa; its duration is extended from one to two or three years; the events recorded, with a few exceptions, are entirely different. Instead of the simple narrative of the Synoptics, the Fourth Gospel is clothed in a philosophic garb; the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, as there described, is loftier and more divine; the discourses in the Fourth Gospel are of a different character from the parables in the Synoptics; the style, diction, and expression of the Gospel are the same throughout, so that our Lord's discourses are precisely similar to the author's own reflections; and the day of our Lord's death is differently given in the Fourth Gospel from what it is in the Synoptics. These points have given rise to objections which have been brought forward and insisted on by those who deny the authorship of John.

1. The scene of our Lord's ministry is asserted to be different. In John's Gospel the scene is placed chiefly in Judæa. The visits of Christ to the great annual feasts at Jerusalem, the conversations which He had with the Jews on these occasions, and the miracles which He then performed, are the chief contents of the Fourth Gospel, whilst His ministry in Galilee is only casually alluded to. One would think, from a perusal of this Gospel, that Judæa, and not Galilee, was the chief scene of our Lord's ministry. The Synoptic narratives, on the contrary, are almost entirely confined to the Galilean ministry, and one would hardly have known that Jesus ever went up to Jerusalem until the last Passover, when He was crucified. Now, in answer to this objection, it is to be remarked that it is evident

from John's Gospel that our Lord's ministry was not limited to Jerusalem. There is in it frequent mention of Galilee; the residence in Capernaum, the miracle of the feeding of the multitude which occurred in the neighbourhood of Bethsaida Julias, the discourse on the bread of life in the synagogue of Capernaum, the appearance of the risen Lord at the Sea of Tiberias are there recorded (John ii. 12; vi. 1, 59; xxi. 1). We are informed that Jesus walked in Galilee, for He would not walk in Jewry because the Jews sought to kill Him (John vii. 1); and He omitted a Passover, and it would seem from the narrative spent nearly a whole year in Galilee (John vi. 4). On the other hand, the Judæan ministry is presupposed in the Synoptic Gospels. Indeed, in one passage in Luke's Gospel (Luke iv. 44), it is directly mentioned, according to the reading of the best manuscripts. Where it is said in our version that Jesus preached in the synagogues of Galilee, the best manuscripts read the synagogues of Judæa.¹ Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem frequently attended our Lord's ministry (Luke v. 17). Judas, the traitor, was a native of Kerioth in Judæa (Mark iii. 19), and Joseph of Arimathea, one of our Lord's secret disciples, was probably a resident in Jerusalem (Mark xv. 43, 46). The lamentation over Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered thy children together" (Matt. xxiii. 37; Luke xiii. 34), implied that our Lord must often have preached the Gospel in that city, and invited its inhabitants to enter

¹ *Σ. B. C. L.* The reading adopted by Alford, Tischendorf, 8th edit., and Westcott and Hort. In the Revised Version it is placed only in the margin.

into His kingdom.¹ And after His Ascension the disciples fixed their headquarters in Jerusalem, which they would not have done had they not already obtained some footing in that city. Besides, it was the duty of all the Jews to attend the three great annual feasts at Jerusalem, and we cannot suppose that Jesus, who came to fulfil all righteousness, would neglect doing so during the period of His ministry, provided, of course, that extended more than a year; and it is to be observed that the incidents recorded in John's Gospel, as occurring in Judæa, took place at our Lord's attendance at these annual feasts of the Jews. The Galilean ministry, then, chiefly dwelt upon by the Synoptists, does not exclude the repeated visits of Jesus to Jerusalem at the Jewish feasts, chiefly dwelt on by John.

2. It is urged that the duration of our Lord's ministry, as recorded by John, is different from that recorded by the other Evangelists. There are at least three Passovers mentioned in John's Gospel; the first after the marriage at Cana, to which Jesus went up and His disciples (John ii. 13); the second, which He omitted and abode in Galilee (John vi. 3, 4); and the third, the last Passover, at which He suffered (John xii. 1). This accordingly presupposes a ministry extending over two or three years. In the Synoptic Gospels, on the other hand, mention is made only of one Passover, and it has accordingly been affirmed that our Lord's ministry lasted only one year. In the writings of the Fathers

¹ We do not, however, lay much stress on Luke x. 38, that our Lord entered into a certain village where He was entertained by Martha and Mary, because Bethany is not mentioned by that Evangelist as the name of the village.

the one year's ministry is the prevailing opinion ;¹ but this is evidently only an inference which they have drawn from a cursory view of the Synoptic Gospels. While, according to John's Gospel, our Lord's ministry must have lasted more than two years, there is absolutely nothing in the Synoptic Gospels which would guide us to determine its duration. Luke tells us that it commenced in the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being Governor of Judæa (Luke iii. 1), and Pontius Pilate was still governor when our Lord was put to death ; but as Pontius Pilate was not banished until A.D. 36, this would give a period of six years to which Christ's ministry might be extended. Besides, it is highly improbable that all that is stated in the Synoptic Gospels, the repeated missionary journeys of Christ in Galilee, His numerous discourses and miracles, the mission, first of the twelve, and then of the seventy, and especially the careful education and training of the twelve, could be crowded within the space of one year. There is then no discrepancy between these Gospels and John's regarding the duration of our Lord's ministry.

3. It is asserted that the events of our Lord's ministry recorded in the Fourth Gospel, with a few exceptions, are entirely different from those recorded in the Synoptic Gospels ; actions of the highest importance, and what appears to be essential to a record of the life of Jesus, recorded in the one are omitted in the other. But if the Gospel of John is a supplementary Gospel, if the author saw the other three Gospels, and wrote purposely to narrate facts and discourses not recorded in these

¹ So Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Lactantius, and others.

Gospels, this circumstance appears to be a complete solution of the above objection. Besides the record of the last sufferings, the only important incident common to all the four Gospels is the miraculous feeding of the multitude ;¹ but even this appears to be given in John's Gospel for the purpose of introducing our Lord's discourse on the bread of life. The baptism of Christ, the institution of the Supper, the agony of Gethsemane, and other events of supreme importance are omitted in John's Gospel ; but the reason of this omission may have been that they were already fully recorded in the previous Gospels. Other most important events, the cure of the man who was born blind, the healing of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, and especially the resurrection of Lazarus, mentioned by John, are omitted by the Synoptists ; but the works of Jesus are so numerous that it would have been impossible to have recorded them all, so that a selection must have been made, and in making this selection the Synoptists appear to have confined themselves mainly to the events which occurred during the Galilean ministry. Besides, it is to be observed that the facts recorded by the Synoptists are in John's Gospel presupposed as known. The baptism of Jesus is not mentioned, but there is a distinct allusion to it in the saying of the Baptist, "I saw the Spirit descend like a dove and it abode on Him" (John i. 32). There is no account of the institution of the Supper, but mention is made of the disclosure of the betrayer at the table (John xiii. 21-30) ; there is no record of the agony in the garden, but we are informed that Jesus went forth with His

¹ Matt. xiv. 13-23 ; Mark vi. 30-46 ; Luke ix. 10-17 ; John vi. 1-15.

disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into which He entered with His disciples (John xviii. 1).

But there is one event, recorded in John's Gospel, of so important and wonderful a nature, and which was followed with such momentous results, that its omission in the Synoptic Gospels is considered a grave difficulty; we allude to the resurrection of Lazarus. How does it happen that this miracle, the greatest which Jesus performed, the raising of a man to life after he had been in his grave four days, is not mentioned in any of the other Gospels? Admitting that the Fourth Gospel is supplementary, it is difficult to understand how this wonderful miracle could be omitted by the Synoptists, especially as Mary and Martha are mentioned in the Gospel of Luke (Luke x. 38, 39). "According to the Fourth Gospel," observes Dr. Davidson, "the resurrection of Lazarus was most important in its consequences, producing so great an effect upon the Jews at Jerusalem that the Sanhedrim resolved to put Jesus to death. The miracle happened at Bethany, in the immediate neighbourhood of the capital, only a few days before the Saviour's triumphant entry into the city, which was but a prelude to His death on the cross. To perform it, He had come from the district beyond Jordan. The Synoptists, however, make no mention of the incident, which is tantamount to their ignorance of it, otherwise they could hardly have omitted it."¹ Now it must be candidly confessed that this is a difficulty of which we

¹ Davidson's *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, 1st edit., vol. ii. p. 263; 2d edit., vol. ii. p. 322.

have failed to find a completely satisfactory solution. As Neander observes, "To seek a special reason for the omission in this case could lead to nothing but arbitrary hypotheses."¹ But it must be observed that the objection, if it be an objection, is founded on the argument from silence—that there is no mention of the miracle in the other Gospels—a very precarious argument on which to found a conclusion. Various reasons for the omission of the miracle by the Synoptists have been assigned. It has been asserted that tradition was silent on the fact out of a regard to Lazarus and his two sisters. We read that the priests took counsel to put Lazarus also to death. If their attention had been directed to him, he might have been exposed to persecution and danger; whereas, when John wrote, Lazarus would certainly have been dead.² But we feel that this is unsatisfactory; it is founded on a mere series of conjectures; and even although the narration of the miracle had exposed Lazarus to persecution, yet what of that if the glory of Christ were advanced thereby? Others assert that it did not lie within the sphere of the Synoptists. They confined themselves until our Lord's Passion to the Galilean ministry, and omitted all those miracles which happened in Jerusalem recorded by John, and for this reason do not mention the raising of Lazarus. "The ministry of Jesus in Galilee," observes Meyer, "is, as their Gospels actually prove, the allotted province to which the older evangelistic historical writings confined their task and performance, and this task included the Galilean raisings

¹ Neander's *Life of Christ*, p. 378, note; Bohm's edition.

² Godet's *Commentary on John*, vol. i. pp. 114-116.

from the dead, but excluded that of Lazarus.”¹ But according to John, it was this miracle that was one of the efficient causes that led the Pharisees to devise the death of Christ. Others think that we exaggerate the significance of this miracle; we put our own ideas into the minds of the Jews. The Jews may have regarded raisings from the dead in the same point of view as other miracles; hence, in the answer to the disciples of John, the “dead are raised” is mentioned as on the same level with other supernatural works. “To us,” observes Dr. Sanday, “the raising of the dead stands apart from other miracles in a class by itself, as peculiarly unexampled and incredible. But that it was not so regarded at the time when the Gospel was written appears from this very narrative, where the Jews are made to ask whether He who opened the eyes of the blind could not have prevented the death of Lazarus altogether.”² It is also to be observed that the raising of the widow’s son of Nain, the miracle which we consider next in point of greatness to the raising of Lazarus, is only mentioned in one of the Gospels (Luke vii. 11–15). Besides, the performance of this miracle best accounts for the enthusiastic reception of Jesus by the multitude on His entrance into Jerusalem on the one hand, and for the increased animosity of the Pharisees which resulted in His death on the other. The narrative bears internal marks of genuineness. The description given of the incident is so minute, so circumstantial, so graphic, and accompanied with so many unartificial particulars as to prove

¹ *Commentary on St. John’s Gospel*, vol. ii. pp. 138, 139 (T. & T. Clark’s translation).

² *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 186.

that it is the description of an eye-witness. There is no art about it; the devotion of Thomas and his fellow-Apostles, the impulsiveness of Martha, and the calm submission of Mary, the sympathy and love of Jesus, the conduct of the Jews who came to comfort the sisters, impress us with a sense of the reality of the narrative.

4. The philosophical character of the Fourth Gospel is adduced as an additional objection to its genuineness. It is argued that it is in the highest degree improbable that a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee should write such a narrative of the life of Jesus as that contained in the Fourth Gospel, a narrative which commences with a profound statement concerning the nature of the Logos and His relation to God, and which is throughout highly subjective and full of philosophical thoughts; it appears rather to be the work of a disciple of Plato, or at least of Philo. We reserve the consideration of the doctrine of the Logos for a special dissertation; but meantime we would only remark that this doctrine has its roots in the Old Testament, and was in conformity with the Rabbinical views then prevalent among the Jews, and that even Philo derived his doctrine of the Logos as much from the Old Testament as from Plato. Nor does the statement concerning the Logos extend beyond the prologue; it is never adverted to elsewhere in the Gospel. The thoughtful and spiritual character of the Gospel is no objection to the authorship of John, when we consider the strong external authentication of the Gospel and the disposition of the beloved disciple. The love which was his predominant characteristic would constrain him to live more in the internal world

of feeling than in the external world of action; his character is rather contemplative than practical; he would delight to dwell rather upon the sentiments than upon the actions of his Master. Besides, his realisation of Christ as a Divine Being must have imparted an elevation to his thoughts, and thus increased his mental strength and spirituality. We see continually the elevating and refining power of religion; and how much more must this have been the case with John when he enjoyed the intercourse of Him who was God manifest in the flesh; he was raised with Christ into heavenly places.

5. Analogous to the above objection is another, derived from the delineation of Christ's person. It is affirmed that the person of our Lord as delineated in John's Gospel is very different from the Christ of the Synoptics; the portrait is not the same. In John's Gospel His divinity is prominently brought forward; He is the incarnate Logos. Divine worship is claimed by Him. His pre-existence is repeatedly asserted, as in the following declarations: "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" "Jesus said to them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was I am." "And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me; for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John vi. 62; viii. 58; xvii. 5, 24). Whereas, on the other hand, it is

affirmed that by the Synoptists Jesus is represented chiefly as a divinely-inspired teacher, as a great worker of miracles, but without any special reference to His divine nature or pre-existence. It is admitted that the divinity of Christ is more prominently brought forward and more distinctly taught in the Fourth Gospel than by the Synoptics. John, probably by longer experience and a more intimate communion with Christ, by a deeper insight into His nature and by more abundant revelations, was more deeply imbued with a sense of our Lord's divinity: he beholds in Him the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father. But he does not overlook His humanity; he mentions His being weary with His journey on His way to Samaria, His weeping and groaning in spirit at the tomb of Lazarus, His being troubled at the prospect of His suffering, His washing the feet of His disciples, His thirst on the cross (John iv. 6; xi. 33, 35; xii. 27; xiii. 5; xix. 28). On the other hand, our Lord's divinity is taught or presupposed in the Synoptic Gospels: His miraculous incarnation, His approval of the confession of Peter that He was the Son of God, His repeated assertion that He would come again in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and that He would appear as Judge of the world; His promise that He will be with His people always, even to the end of the world, and His command that His followers should be baptized in His name as well as in that of the Father and the Holy Ghost are there recorded.

6. Another objection to the genuineness of John's Gospel is that the discourses contained in it are of an

entirely different character from those given by the Synoptists. In John's Gospel the discourses are speculative and abstract; they are mystical, and relate to the deep things of God; instead of parables, there are allegories, as those of the Good Shepherd and the sheep, and of the Vine and its branches. Whereas in the Synoptic Gospels the discourses of Jesus are expressed in parables, brought down to the comprehension of the people, and eminently practical. In order to see the difference we have only to compare our Lord's last discourse to His disciples with the Sermon on the Mount. "If," says Renan, "Jesus spoke as Matthew would have us to believe, He could not have spoken in the manner represented by John."¹ It is admitted that there is this difference, though we consider that it has been frequently exaggerated. Two reasons may be assigned for it—the relation of John to Christ, and the difference of the persons addressed. The first reason we have often had occasion to allude to. John was the beloved disciple of Christ, he of all the Apostles was most intimately associated with Him, his character bore a close resemblance to Him, and thus he was enabled to imbibe His spirit and to assimilate His ideas in his mind, so as to reproduce His sentiments. And as a second reason it must be remembered that the chief discourses in John's Gospel were addressed to the inner circle of the disciples, whilst the discourses in the Synoptic Gospels were addressed to the multitude. Reference has been repeatedly made on this subject to the different representations of the person and teaching

¹ Renan's *Life of Jesus*, Introduction, p. 43.

of Socrates as given by Xenophon and Plato, as somewhat analogous to the Jesus of the Synoptics and the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel. By Xenophon, Socrates is the practical teacher, and by Plato he is the speculative philosopher. Formerly these representations were thought to be irreconcilable, but now it is generally admitted that both are true, and that they are only different aspects of one and the same character.¹ Now, if a wise man like Socrates could exhibit this diversity of character, is it not reasonable to suppose that Christ, who was more than a man, at once human and divine, could display an equal, and even greater many-sidedness, appearing as the practical teacher in the Synoptic Gospels, and as the revealer of heavenly things in that of St. John? Besides, the difference has been greatly exaggerated; traces of Johannine teaching pervade the Synoptic Gospels; and long lists have been given of sayings of Jesus occurring in John's Gospel, which appear almost identically the same in the Synoptics.² Especially in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke there is a passage which bears a strong and striking resemblance to the language used by Jesus in the Gospel of John. Our Lord, expressing His joy and satisfaction with the result of the mission of the seventy disciples, is represented as saying, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of

¹ See Bleek's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. i. p. 212; Luthardt's *St. John the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 225; Godet's *Commentary on St. John's Gospel*, vol. i. p. 165. So also Schleiermacher, Brandis, and Ritter.

² Godet gives a list of twenty-seven sayings of Jesus, occurring in St. John's Gospel, which appear almost identically the same in the Synoptics. *Commentary on St. John's Gospel*, vol. i. pp. 154-156. A similar list, amounting to twenty-eight instances, is given by Luthardt, *St. John the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 232-235.

heaven and earth, that Thou hast kept these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes; even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight. All things are delivered unto Me of My Father, and no man knoweth who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him" (Matt. xi. 25-27; Luke x. 21, 22). This has been well called "an erratic Johannine block that has strayed into Synoptic soil." The formation from which it was taken must previously have existed. This proves that language essentially Johannine was not unusual with Jesus when He conversed in private with His disciples.

The question has been often put, How has John recorded these discourses of Jesus? How could he, after the lapse of more than half a century, have remembered the words of Jesus? Especially, how could he so accurately detail the conversation which took place between Jesus and His disciples at the Last Supper? But the words of Jesus on such an occasion must have made an indelible impression on such a receptive mind as that of John; they must have been stored up in his memory, and have been often repeated by him in his conversations with his disciples; perhaps, at an early period, they may have been committed to writing. "Little," observes Neander, "do such objectors conceive of the nature of the human soul and of the power of deep impressions upon it. Such impressions these discourses must have made upon a mind and heart like John's; and what was received thus into the depths of his soul, no concussions could cast out. He must have repeated

these discourses, times without number, to others; how, then, can it be said that he could not commit them faithfully to writing? John could not have been John, had it been possible for him to forget such discourses of Christ?"¹ Besides, we must remember that the Holy Spirit was promised not only to guide the Apostles in their writings and to teach them all things, but to bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever Jesus had said to them (John xiv. 26). If, then, John wrote under the higher inspiration of the Spirit, if his memory was quickened, if the impressions once made upon him were resuscitated, we may be satisfied that the discourses which he records contain the very thoughts of Jesus; indeed, they bear impressed upon them the divinity of their origin. As an example in point, Irenæus, writing to his fellow-disciple Florinus, states that he can recall perfectly the discourses of their master, Polycarp. "I remember," he says, "the events of those times much better than those of more recent occurrence, how Polycarp used to relate the discourses of those who had seen the Lord, and what things he had heard from them concerning the Lord. These things, by the mercy of God and the opportunity then afforded me, I attentively heard, noting them down, not on paper, but in my heart."² In age the impressions of youth frequently come vividly back to the memory.

7. It is further objected that the style, diction, and expressions of John are the same when recording the

¹ Neander's *Life of Christ*, pp. 436, 437, Bohn's edition.

² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 20.

sayings of the Baptist and Jesus as when he gives his own remarks and observations. His reminiscences of the words of Jesus are so blended with his own thoughts, that it is impossible to know what are the sentiments of Jesus and what are those of John. As Dr. Abbott observes, "So great is the similarity between the words of the writer and the words which are assigned by him either to our Lord or to John the Baptist, that Dr. Westcott, commenting on John iii. 10-21, 27-36, says, 'It is impossible not to feel that the Evangelist, in fact, is commenting on and explaining the testimony which he records. The comments seem to begin respectively at verses 16 and 31.'"¹ Now, it is admitted that there is truth in this observation ; a certain sameness of style and diction and expression pervades the whole of John's Gospel. But then it must be remembered that the words of Jesus and the Baptist, as given by John, are a translation ; they were originally spoken in Aramaic, and not in Greek, and thus the sameness in style and diction may be accounted for. We have also no hesitation in allowing a certain degree of subjectivity on the part of John. The thoughts and sentiments were those of Jesus, but John clothed them in his own language, and in some cases subjoins to those discourses of Jesus his own reflections.² Probably, also, he unites into one

¹ Article "Gospels" in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. x. p. 819.

² See Weiss, *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. ii. pp. 381-383, translation. "Owing," he observes, "to the free, explanatory, and elucidatory rendering of the words of Jesus, for which, moreover, there is no lack of precedent in the Synoptical discourses of Christ, it cannot be matter of surprise that the discourses of Christ in the Fourth Gospel exhibit the linguistic and doctrinal character of the Evangelist throughout, as he is known to us from his Epistle.

discourse utterances of Jesus spoken at different times. The sacred writers, in recording the words of Jesus, do not lose their idiosyncrasies, and therefore this sameness of expression between the discourses of Christ and the reflections of the Apostle ought not to surprise us, far less be regarded as an objection to the truth of his declarations. The ideas of Christ are preserved to us in this encasing of the Apostle's expressions.

8. A great and acknowledged difficulty exists with regard to the day of our Lord's death. According to the Fourth Gospel, this occurred before the Passover, or on the 14th Nisan (John xiii. 1, 29; xviii. 28; xix. 14); whereas, in the Synoptics, we are expressly informed that Jesus partook of the Passover with His disciples, and that, consequently, His death occurred on the 15th Nisan (Matt. xxvi. 18; Mark xiv. 12; Luke xxii. 15). Here it is said that there is an obvious discrepancy between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics. This point is of such difficulty, and the views concerning it are so conflicting, that we reserve its consideration for a special dissertation. Meanwhile, supposing that we admit the reality of the difference between the narrative of the Synoptists and John; that according to the Synoptists Christ and His disciples partook of the Passover at one time, whilst, according to John, the Jewish rulers partook of it at another; what follows from such an admission? Surely not the spuriousness of the Fourth Gospel, in defiance of all the external and internal evidences in its favour. There may be a method of reconciliation which has not yet been discovered; we are not acquainted with all the facts of

the case, nor with the details of the method in which the Jews celebrated their Passover.

Such is the summary of the external and internal evidences in favour of the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel. The external evidences appear to be as strong and as convincing as for any other book of the New Testament; the Gospel can be traced close to the lifetime of the asserted author. The internal evidences also point to John, the beloved disciple. It is not denied that there are difficulties which have perhaps not yet been fully solved, and even objections, as that connected with the day of Christ's death, to which no satisfactory answer has yet been given; but the difficulties are immensely greater on the assumption of the other view of the subject: there are still more intricate questions to be answered, and graver objections to be solved; and in particular the whole series of external testimonies in favour of John's Gospel must be explained away and set aside, and all those internal proofs and evidences which lead up to the recognition of the authorship of the beloved disciple must be ignored. Indeed, Olshausen hardly overstates the fact when he says, "The Gospel of John possesses stronger testimony with respect to its genuineness than perhaps any other writing in the New Testament, or, we may say, of the whole of antiquity."¹ "We may boldly declare," observes Ebrard, "that, excepting a few of Paul's Epistles, no book of all antiquity, either in Christian or heathen literature, can show such numerous and sure proofs of its authenticity as the Gospel of John."²

¹ Olshausen *On the Gospels*, vol. iii. p. 171 (T. & T. Clark's translation):

² *Wissenschaftliche Kritik der evangelischen Geschichte*, translation, p. 598.

III.—DESIGN AND CONTENTS.

Some suppose that the Fourth Gospel was designed to be a historical supplement, written for the purpose of recording some remarkable incidents in the life of our Lord, and some important discourses not mentioned in the other Gospels; and especially of giving greater prominence to the spiritual character of our Lord's life and teaching. The Fathers inform us that this was the purpose which John had in view. Thus Clemens Alexandrinus says, "John, perceiving that what had reference to the body (that is, the outward events) was clearly set forth in the other Gospels, and being encouraged by his familiar friends, and urged by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel."¹ And Eusebius remarks, "The three Gospels previously written having come into general circulation, and also having been handed to him (John), they say that he admitted them, giving his testimony to their truth; but alleging that there was wanting in the narration the account of the things done by Christ at the commencement of His ministry. And this was the truth; for it is evident that the other three Evangelists only wrote the deeds of our Lord for the year after the imprisonment of John the Baptist, and intimated this in the very beginning of their history. . . . For these reasons the Apostle John, it is said, being entreated to undertake it, wrote the account of the time not recorded by the other three Evangelists, and the deeds done by our Saviour during this

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, vi. 14.

period, namely, the events which occurred before the imprisonment of the Baptist, and this fact is intimated by him when he says, ‘This beginning of miracles did Jesus.’”¹ And Jerome expresses himself in similar terms. “Another reason of John’s writing is also mentioned, which is, that after reading the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, he expressed his approbation of their history, and corroborated their narratives, but observed that they had recorded an account of but one year of our Lord’s ministry, namely, that following the imprisonment of John the Baptist, in which year He also suffered. Omitting, therefore, that year, the history of which had been written by the other three, he related the acts of the preceding time before John (the Baptist) was shut up in prison, as may appear to those who read the works of the four Evangelists with care; which may serve to account for the seeming difference between John and the rest.”² And this is undoubtedly to a considerable extent true. If John wrote his Gospel late in the apostolic age, there is nothing improbable in the supposition that he had seen the other Gospels before he wrote his own. If this be questioned, it is at least certain that John must have been thoroughly acquainted with the oral or written Gospel (the Logia), which was in circulation among the early Christians, and which, as is now generally admitted, lay at the basis of the Synoptics. There is, as we already have had occasion to observe, in the Fourth Gospel abundant evidence, not only that the author himself was acquainted with

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 24.

² *Catalog. Scriptor. Eccles.*, c. 9.

the incidents narrated in the Synoptics, but that he takes for granted a similar acquaintance on the part of his readers.¹ This previous acquaintance is the only reason, by which we can account for the omission and insertion of important facts not recorded in the other Gospels. Until we come to the history of the last sufferings, with the exception of the miraculous feeding of the multitude and our Lord's walking on the sea, there is little in common between John and the Synoptists. And even the narratives of the Passion and the Resurrection are very different; facts are mentioned by John which are omitted by the other Evangelists, and conversely. "As I think," observes Professor Salmon, "that mere accident will not account for the likeness to each other of the Synoptic Gospels, so also do I think that mere accident will not account for the unlikeness of St. John's to the others. If he had written an account of our Saviour's life without any knowledge that other accounts had been written, it is incredible that he could have so successfully avoided telling what is related in these accounts. The true explanation, I am persuaded, is that which has commonly been given, namely, that this Evangelist, knowing what accounts Christians already had in their hands, wrote his Gospel with the intention of supplementing these previous accounts."² But although, without doubt, John designed his Gospel to be a historical supplement, and this influenced him in his omissions and insertions, yet this was not his primary

¹ See *ante*, p. 134 f.

² Salmon's *Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 352, 353.

design : his Gospel was not a mere record of previously unrecorded facts and discourses, however important that might be, but these were given with a design and purpose which were peculiarly his own.¹

Others suppose that John's Gospel was a polemical treatise, written with a view to confute certain heretical tendencies then prevalent in the Church. This view is also mentioned by the Fathers. Thus Irenæus observes : "John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by the proclamation of his Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men, and previously by those termed Nicolaitanes, which are an offshoot of that knowledge falsely so called, that he might confound them and persuade them that there is but one God, who made all things by His Word."² And Jerome expresses himself in similar terms, substituting the Ebionites for the Nicolaitanes : "As John was in Asia, and the seed sown by heretics, as Cerinthus, Ebion, and others, who denied that Christ is come in the flesh, was already sprouting, he, at the solicitation of the brethren, wrote his Gospel."³ Various heretical sects have been named. Erasmus and Hengstenberg suppose that John wrote against Cerinthus ; De Wette agrees with Jerome in thinking that the Ebionites are specially adverted to ; Ebrard thinks that John had the Docetæ in view ; and Grotius and Ewald, the Sabeans, or the disciples of John the Baptist. And this design must also be recognised. It

¹ This opinion, that the Gospel was a historical supplement, is adopted by Hug, Michaelis, Ebrard, Ewald, Beyschlag, and among English critics by Westcott and Salmon.

² *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 11, 1.

³ *De Vir. Illust.*, ix.

is evident that the opening words of the Gospel have a polemic design, and refer to certain errors which were then disseminated in the Church. At the time when John wrote, the Gnostic heresies had arisen. Reference is made to them in the Epistle to the Colossians and in the Pastoral Epistles; but since that time, during a space of twenty years, Gnosticism had been developed, and seriously endangered the purity of the Church. The views of the early Gnostics chiefly consisted in denying that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. Cerinthus, for example, a contemporary of John, taught that the aeon Christ descended on Jesus at His baptism and left Him before His crucifixion. They also denied the divinity of our Lord, and thought that Jesus was a mere man, the son of Mary and Joseph. It was undoubtedly against these Gnostic heretics that John wrote his Epistle; and the Gospel also refers to them. Against the denial of the true divinity of Christ, the Gospel lays the utmost stress on His pre-existence and divine consciousness; and against the denial of His true humanity it emphasises His human sympathy and sufferings. But it is evident that this was not the primary design of the Gospel; the polemical element in it is very small, and hardly discernible; whilst it attacked error, it disclosed and established the truth.¹

Others suppose that the Fourth Gospel was designed to be a dogmatic and apologetic discourse, written to teach a certain system of doctrine. John was known in the early Church by the title *θεολόγος*. We need not

¹ The polemical design of the Gospel is held by Hug, Michaelis, Ebrard, Hengstenberg, Lange, and Alford.

here allude to the tendency-theory of the Tübingen school, as this is now generally relinquished. Lücke supposes that John's design was to inculcate the true Gnosis as a counterpoise to the false knowledge of the Gnostics. Reuss especially insists upon the dogmatic character of the Fourth Gospel. He asserts that the term Gospel cannot be applied to it in the same sense as to the other three; that it is rather a theological treatise than a history; and he considers the aim of the author to be to promulgate a "theology founded on the idea of our Saviour's divinity." "It is," he observes, "in the highest degree important for the just understanding and estimation of this book that the reader should bear in mind before all things its essentially dogmatic character. It does not give a history of Jesus and His teachings after the manner of the other Gospels, but it contains, in historical form, an exposition of the Christian faith, in so far as its central point is the Person of Christ."¹ There is considerable truth also in this view of the subject. The exalted nature of Christ, His divinity, and eternal Sonship are the prominent subjects of this Gospel. But we must not so greatly emphasise its dogmatic nature as to overlook its historic character. This Gospel, equally as the other three, contains a history of Jesus Christ; indeed, the life of Christ is here treated with greater exactness, and the succession of events can be more distinctly traced, than in the Synoptics. From the mention in it of the various

¹ *Geschichte des heil. Schriften N. T.*, p. 210; translation, p. 219. The view of Baur is similar. He considers the whole historical statement but a development of the prologue; and observes that the Fourth Gospel resembles rather the drama of a poet than the work of a historian.

Jewish festivals, we can almost trace the life of our Lord chronologically from His baptism to His crucifixion, and can mark the development of the hatred of the Jewish rulers from its first beginnings until it terminated in the catastrophe of the death of Christ.¹

The immediate design and occasion of the Gospel is thus stated by John himself: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye may have life in His name" (John xx. 30, 31; see also xix. 35). Whilst the other Gospels contain a record of the life of Christ for the information of the Church, the Fourth Gospel is essentially an historical writing composed with an evangelical purpose. This purpose, as here stated, was twofold. The first was to establish Christians in the faith of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. So far Reuss is perfectly correct in asserting that one chief design of the Fourth Gospel was to bring into prominence the divinity of Christ. Hence this Gospel regards Jesus chiefly as the Son of God. It commences by announcing His divinity, that He is the incarnate Divine Word, and this idea pervades the whole Gospel. The works and the discourses of Jesus are those of the Incarnate Word; His very sufferings are no proof of weakness, but the voluntary sufferings of the Son of God, who had power over His own life.² There are intimations in the Gospel that it was written after errors had arisen concerning the

¹ See Bleek's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. ii. pp. 323, 324.

² See on this point Meyer's *Commentary on John*, pp. 42-50, translation.

person of Christ, and hence the subordinate polemical design was to correct these errors. John reveals the true Gnosis, the self-revelation of Christ as the Son of God. "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John xvii. 3). The second purpose was, that believing in Christ as the Son of God, they might have life through His name. Hence the doctrine of Christ as the life of the world and of our union with Him; that it is out of His fulness that we receive grace for grace; that we live only because He lives in us; that as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can we, except we abide in Christ (John i. 16; xiv. 19; xv. 4).

The Gospel of John and the Synoptics are biographies of Christ. There are points of resemblance and points of difference between them. It is the same Christ who is portrayed, but the portrait is viewed in different lights. In John's Gospel we see into His inner nature—the heart of Jesus is disclosed; it has been well denominated by the Fathers "the spiritual Gospel;"¹ in the Synoptics we read chiefly of the external life of Jesus—His intercourse with men and His discourses to the multitude. In John's Gospel we see Jesus in retirement, pouring out the fulness of His love on His disciples; in the Synoptics we see Jesus in the world, living a sinless life. We must also remember that both in the Fourth Gospel and in the Synoptics we have recorded only a very small portion of the actions and discourses of Christ; there are many other works which

¹ πνευματικὸν εὐαγγέλιον.

Jesus did, and many other discourses which He uttered, which are not recorded; at best we have only a selection. We are distinctly informed that John's Gospel is fragmentary. Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book (John xx. 30; see also xxi. 25). And that the Synoptic Gospels are equally fragmentary is evident from the nature of the records, from manifold intimations in the Gospels themselves, and from the fulness of such a life as that of Christ. All His words and actions must have been of high significance.

The Evangelists, in writing the life of Christ, must have made a selection of His words and actions from a great abundance; they must have drawn from an almost inexhaustible treasure. We do not know the principles on which the Synoptists made their selection; they drew from an original and oral Gospel, or, as many critics suppose, a written Gospel (the Logia), to which they added some special incidents that came under their own cognisance.¹ Luke appears to have had several records of the life of Christ before him in the composition of his Gospel. John, however, wrote with a purpose, and therefore would choose those incidents and discourses which were best fitted for the accomplishment of the design he had in view, namely, to lead men to believe that Jesus was the Christ the Son of God, and to enable them to derive spiritual and eternal life through their faith in Him.

As to the sources of John's Gospel, it is evident that

¹ Enormous labour has recently been expended in Germany on the origin of the Synoptic Gospels. It is beyond the nature of this work to discuss this subject.

he was not indebted to any previous records of the life of Christ. He, in all probability, saw the other three Gospels, but, so far from deriving his information from them, he appears carefully to have avoided recording the incidents and discourses contained in them. The chief source of his information was his own experience; his Gospel professes to be the record of an eye-witness. What he affirms in his Epistle is peculiarly applicable to his Gospel. "That which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled concerning the Word of life; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you" (John i. 1, 3). The words and actions of Christ made an indelible impression on his mind, were vividly preserved in his memory, and were faithfully recorded. If there are in his Gospel any events of which he was not an eye-witness, and any discourses of which he was not an ear-witness, his intimate intercourse with the Lord, and his connection with his fellow-Apostles, fully account for his knowledge of them; but, from a perusal of the Gospel, it will be found that these events and discourses must have been few in number. In all probability he was a listener to the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, and to His discourse with the woman of Samaria.

The Gospel admits of the following divisions:—The Prologue, chap. i. 1–18; three main divisions, the first, extending from chaps. i. 18–xii. 50; the second, from chaps. xiii.–xvii.; and the third, from chaps. xviii.–xx.; and the Epilogue, chap. xxi. The Prologue contains a general statement of the subject of the Gospel, that

Jesus is the Incarnate Word, the Christ, the Son of God, and that He is the Life and Light of the world. The first main division contains a record of His public ministry, the testimonies which were borne to Him, and His rejection by the Jews; the second main division contains the farewell discourse of Christ to His disciples; and the third main division the record of His sufferings, death, and resurrection. The Epilogue or appendix appears to have been written for a special purpose, to record a remarkable appearance of Christ in Galilee after His resurrection, and to correct an error which had gone abroad that the author of the Gospel should not die. The whole Gospel must be viewed as written with the special design to lead to the acknowledgment of Jesus as the Son of God or the Incarnate Divine Word.

A table of the contents of the Gospel, more or less full, is given in the various commentaries.¹ It is not necessary to give a minute analysis; let the following suffice:—

The Prologue; the incarnation of the Logos, i. 1-18.

I. The revelation and ministry of the Son of God to the world.

- a. Testimonies borne to Christ: by the Baptist, i. 19-34; by the disciples, i. 35-51; by His miracles, i. 1-11.
- b. The ministry of Christ: in Judæa, ii. 13-iii. 36; in Samaria, iv. 1-42; in Galilee, iv. 43-54.
- c. Christ's self-revelation as Son of God: in Jerusalem, v.; in Galilee, vi.

¹ See especially Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. i., Prolegomena, pp. 71, 72; Westcott's *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, pp. 258-260; Lange's *Commentary on John*, pp. 41-46, American translation; Godet's *Commentary on John*, vol. i. pp. 67-83, English translation; Reynold's *Commentary on John in Pulpit Commentary*, Introduction, pp. 154-159. Weiss gives a reference to Francke, *Stud. a. Krit.*, 1884, as containing an excellent summary of the different views as to the Evangelist's principle of arrangement.

- d.* Christ's ministry in Jerusalem : at the feast of Tabernacles, vii.-x. ; at the feast of Dedication, ix., x.
- e.* Christ's glorification as Son of God in the resurrection of Lazarus, xi.
- f.* Close of Christ's public ministry, xii.

II. The revelation and ministry of the Son of God to His disciples.

- a.* The last discourses of Christ to His disciples, xiii.-xvi.
- b.* The sacerdotal prayer, xvii.

III. The revelation of the Son of God in His sufferings and resurrection.

- a.* The last sufferings of Christ, xviii., xix.
- b.* The resurrection, xx.

The Epilogue.

- a.* The appearance of the risen Lord at the Sea of Tiberias, xxi. 1-14.
- b.* The Lord and His two disciples Peter and John, xxi. 15-25.

IV.—TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

It is generally admitted that the Gospel of John was the last of the four Gospels. We have the uniform testimony of the Fathers to this effect. Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Eusebius, and Epiphanius all assert that John wrote his Gospel after the other three. Some suppose that the Gospel was written shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem.¹ The reason of this opinion is because John says, " Now there is (ἔστι) at Jerusalem, by the sheep gate, a pool which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches (πέντε στοὰς ἔχουσα) " (John v. 2). It is argued that after the destruction of Jerusalem, although the pool might continue, yet the five

¹ Lardner, Lange, Moses Stuart, &c. Michaelis wavers.

porches would have been destroyed. But this statement of John by no means warrants this conclusion; for, on the one hand, there is no ground to suppose that the destruction of Jerusalem was so complete, that all memorials of the past were swept away—the five porches may have remained standing; and, on the other hand, the statement may merely mean that, at the time when the cure of the impotent man was effected, the pool of Bethesda, with its five porches, was there. There are in the Gospel itself internal marks of a late age. Christianity was diffused, heretical notions concerning the Person of Christ had arisen, and the doctrines concerning Christ had begun to take a definite shape. Others assert that John must have been some time in Ephesus, in order to have acquired his intimate acquaintance with the Greek language. Supposing the Gospel to have been written from Ephesus, it could not have been written before A.D. 66 or A.D. 67, for, as we have seen, before that period John had not arrived at Ephesus. John survived until A.D. 98; but we do not think that the writing of the Gospel was deferred until he was in extreme old age. The particular date of composition is wholly uncertain; we agree with Alford in fixing it between A.D. 70 and A.D. 85.¹

According to the general testimony of the early Church, the Gospel was written at Ephesus, the capital of Proconsular Asia. Thus Irenæus says, “John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence

¹ Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. i., Prolegomena, p. 65. Lardner fixes on A.D. 67; Michaelis, A.D. 70; Credner and Godet, the close of the first century; Meyer, A.D. 80.

at Ephesus in Asia ;”¹ a statement which is repeated by Eusebius in his history.² We have already seen, from incidental notices in the Gospel, that it was written at a distance from Jerusalem ;³ the Hebrew words had to be translated into Greek for the information of the readers. Hug and others, after Theophylact, suppose that the Gospel, along with the Apocalypse, was written at Patmos ; and others think that John dictated his Gospel at Patmos, and published it in Ephesus. But this opinion rests on no foundation, and is a mere unwarranted inference drawn from the words of the Apocalypse. There is no ground to call in question the general opinion that the place of composition was Ephesus.

V.—ITS INTEGRITY.

There are two passages in the Gospel which require consideration, as their genuineness has been questioned.

The first passage is the narrative of the woman taken in adultery (John vii. 53–viii. 11). In the Revised Version this passage is bracketed with the marginal note, “Most of the ancient authorities omit John vii. 53–viii. 11. Those which contain it vary very much from each other.” The earliest mention of it is in the “Apostolic Constitutions,” written about the third century : “And when the elders had set another woman which had sinned before Him, and had left the sentence to Him and were gone out, our Lord, the Searcher of hearts, inquiring of her whether the elders had condemned her, and being

¹ *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 1, 1.

² *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 8.

³ See *ante*, p. 120.

answered 'No,' He said to her, 'Go thy way therefore, for neither do I condemn thee.'"¹ The section is found in 300 manuscripts, among which are the important uncial manuscripts D. F. G. H. K.; in some inferior manuscripts of the old Latin, in the Vulgate, the Ethiopic, and the Jerusalem Syriac; and it is quoted by Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome. Jerome observes: "In the Gospel according to John, many manuscripts, both Greek and Latin, contain an account of an adulterous woman." On the other hand, it is omitted in the best manuscripts, in \aleph and B. A. and C. also, though here defective, must originally have wanted it, as there is no room in the missing leaves for the section. It is marked with an asterisk in E. and M. It is not contained in the best manuscripts of the old Latin,² nor in the Pesbito and the Philoxenian Syriac. It is quoted by none of the Fathers before the end of the fourth century; though Tertullian, if he had known of its existence, would naturally have referred to it in his work *De Pudicitia*. Besides, there are numerous (at least sixty) variations in the readings of those manuscripts which have it, and some of them of importance. It is also inserted in different places; in ten manuscripts it is placed at the end of John's Gospel, and in four others after Luke xxi. 38. And as the external evidence is against its reception, the internal evidence is also, on the whole, unfavourable. It is fully admitted that there is nothing in the passage at variance with the spirit of Christ, and the graphic

¹ *Apost. Constit.*, ii. c. 24.

² Codd. Vercellensis, Brixianus, &c.

nature of the description is in favour of its truth. But it has been clearly shown that the language and style and diction of the paragraph are not those of John, and that it must have proceeded from a different writer.¹ Besides, the context is against it. Its insertion disturbs the connection of the narrative, whereas its omission preserves it. It is awkwardly introduced by the words, "And they went every man unto his own house." The reason which its advocates assign for its omission is that given by Augustine: "Some of little faith, or rather enemies to the true faith, I suppose from a fear lest their wives should gain impurity in sin, removed from their manuscripts the Lord's act of indulgence to the adulteress." But such a reason would operate to a very limited extent. From this examination of the external and internal evidences, we arrive at the conclusion that the passage does not belong to the Gospel of John; whether it may contain a true incident in the life of our Lord is another question. In all probability, it was first attached to the margin as a note, and afterwards was inserted in the text. Alford thinks that the Evangelist may have, in this solitary case, incorporated a portion of the current oral tradition into his narrative, and that this portion may have been afterwards variously corrected from the Gospel of the Hebrews or other traditional sources. Some suppose that it was taken from this apocryphal Gospel of the Hebrews, because Eusebius observes that Papias gives a history of a woman who had been

¹ See Credner's *Einleitung in das N. T.*, pp. 230-232; Davidson's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 430, 2nd edit.

accused of many sins before the Lord, which is contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews;¹ but there is no reason to assume the identity of this woman with the woman taken in adultery. The passage is expunged by Tischendorf, Lachmann, and Tregelles, and by Westcott and Hort in their critical editions, and is rejected by the great majority of Biblical writers.²

The other passage, whose genuineness is questioned, is the epilogue or appendix. The Gospel apparently ends at the close of the twentieth chapter (John xx. 30, 31). The twenty-first chapter comes in unexpectedly, and must be regarded as an appendix. Accordingly many have called in question its genuineness, and suppose that it was a supplement of the Ephesian Church, composed after the death of the Apostle. But here, in contrast to the former passage, all the external and internal evidences are in its favour. It is contained in all the manuscripts and versions of the New Testament, with little variation in their readings. The style and diction is that of the Apostle John. The graphic description which is given bears the marks of an eyewitness. The writer gives a complete account, with all minute details—the disciples fishing at night without success, the names of those disciples, Jesus hardly discerned by the dim light of the dawn, the insight of

¹ *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 20.

² The passage is accepted by Hug, Michaelis, Bengel, Wieseler, Stier, and Ebrard, and rejected by Grotius, Credner, Olshausen, Lücke, Bleek, De Wette, Ewald, Tholuck, Meyer, Luthardt, Godet, Alford, and Westcott. For a full discussion of the passage see Davidson's *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, vol. ii. pp. 427–430, 2nd edit.; Westcott and Hort's *Greek New Testament*, Notes on Select Readings, pp. 82–88; and Scrivener's *Introduction to Criticism of New Testament*, p. 439 ff.

John, the impetuosity of Peter, the distance of the boat from the land, the precise number of the fish caught, the fire of coals and the meal partaken, Peter called upon to follow Christ, and John following Him unbidden—all these circumstances impart a naturalness to the narrative which gives it the impress of truth. Critics differ concerning the genuineness of this passage, but it is accepted by the majority of those belonging to the positive school.¹ On the other hand, the two last verses (verses 24, 25) were probably added to the appendix as the attestation of the Ephesian Church to the genuineness of the Gospel, perhaps after the death of John.²

Various reasons have been assigned for the insertion of this appendix. Baur supposes that its purpose was to exalt John above Peter; whereas Volkmar and Reuss think that it was to re-establish the authority of Peter after his denial. Bleek and Meyer suppose that it was to refute the false report that John would never die. Lange and Schaff, that as an epilogue it is inserted as the counterpart of the prologue. Godet thinks that its design was to assert the confirmation of the Lord's call of the Apostles to preach the Gospel. Its object appears to be threefold—to record the remarkable miracle at the Sea of Galilee after the resurrection; to emphasise the restoration of Peter, after his denial, to the Apostleship; and to refute the erroneous notion then prevalent in the Church of Ephesus that John would not die.

¹ The passage is rejected by Grotius, Lücke, De Wette, Bleek, Ewald, and B. Weiss, and is accepted by Tholuck, Guericke, Lange, Alford, Meyer, Luthardt, Godet, and Westcott.

² So Tholuck, Luthardt, and Godet.

DISSERTATION I.

THE LOGOS.

LITERATURE.—The literature on the Logos of John and its relation to that of Philo is very extensive. It is treated more or less fully in all the commentaries on the Gospel of John by Lücke, Luthardt, Meyer, and Godet. See especially Westcott's Introduction to his *Commentary on John*, and Reynolds in *Pulpit Commentary: John's Gospel*, Introduction, p. 47 ff. The following are the principal works or monographs which treat of the subject:—Burton's *Bampton Lectures*; Liddon's *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 62–66; Bigg's *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 7–26; the article on the Logos by Professor Salmon in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; the article on Philo by Edersheim in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*; Dörner's *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Lehre von der Person Christi*, vol. i. p. 22 ff., Eng. trans., vol. i. p. 19 ff.; Siegfried, *Philo von Alexandria*; Ewald's *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, vol. vi. zweite Ausgabe (1858), p. 231 ff., Eng. trans., vol. vii. p. 195 ff.; Schürer's *Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, part ii., translation, vol. iii. pp. 321–381; Drummond's *Philo Judæus*; Reville, *La Doctrine du Logos dans le quatrième Évangile et dans les Œuvres de Philon*; Jowett's *St. Paul's Epistles*, vol. i. pp. 363–417, St. Paul and Philo; Farrar's *Life of Christ*, vol. i. chap. xiii., Philo and the Doctrine of the Logos; Cremer's *Biblical-Theological Lexicon*, article *λόγος*; Weiss, *Der johannische Lehrbegriff*; Mozley, *The Word*; Mangey, *Philonis Judæi Opera Omnia*.

The doctrine of the Logos as enunciated by John has given risen to much speculation and gathered round it a large amount of literature. It has been one of the objections to the Johannine authorship of the Gospel that the fisherman of Galilee is thereby transformed into

a Christian Platonist. We have already considered this objection as it refers to the philosophical character of the Fourth Gospel generally, and we have now to refer to it particularly in regard to the doctrine of the Logos.

The term Logos, or, as it is translated in our versions, the Word, as applied to the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is peculiar to John; it is found in all the several writings ascribed to him, and occurs in all six times¹—four times in the Gospel, once in the First Epistle, and once in the Apocalypse. In the prologue to the Gospel we have the following statements: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John i. 1, 14). In the introduction to the Epistle we read: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld and our hands handled concerning the Word of Life" (1 John i. 1). And in the Apocalypse, in the description of our Lord as a mighty conqueror, it is said: "And He is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood; and His name is called the Word of God" (Rev. xix. 13). In none of the other writings of the New Testament is the Word so personified as to denote the Lord Jesus Christ. The nearest approach to this usage is in two passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In one it is said, "For the Word of God (*ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ*) is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of

¹ 1 John v. 7, is now acknowledged by all scholars to be spurious.

both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12). Here certainly there is a vivid personification of the Word of God; but it is evident from the context that the reference is to the convincing and quickening power of the Gospel, and not to Jesus Christ. Again we read: "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the Word of God" (ῥήματι θεοῦ) (Heb. xi. 3). But here the term employed is not Logos, and the reference is evidently to the creation or formation of the world by the simple command of God; He spoke the word, and the world came into existence. So also in the Second Epistle of Peter we read, "For this they wilfully forget that there were heavens from of old and an earth compacted out of water and amidst water, by the Word of God" (τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λογῷ) (2 Pet. iii. 5). Here also the reference is not to Jesus Christ, but to the creative energy of God's word.

The term Logos is in the Greek susceptible of two distinct meanings—the Reason (λόγος ἐνδιάθετος: ratio), and the Word (λόγος προφορικός: oratio). The one is subjective, the other objective; the one is the innate principle, and the other its outward expression.¹ Whilst by the Greek philosophers Logos is used to denote the Reason, it is only in the latter sense, as the Word, that the term is employed in John's writings. "The Logos,"[†] remarks Lücke, "is never used either by John or by any other Biblical author of the reason or understanding of God, or even of man." That the Logos of John is

¹ Liddell and Scott express the distinction very clearly: "(a) the power of the mind which is manifested in speech (*ratio*); and (b) the word or outward form by which the inward thought is expressed (*oratio*)."

not to be understood of the divine attribute of Reason, but of a manifestation of the Divine Being, is evident (from the fact that the Evangelist identifies the operations of the Logos with those ascribed in Genesis to the spoken word of God.¹ "The term $\delta \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ must not be explained as equivalent to $\delta \lambda\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omega\nu$, "He who speaks," the revealer of the Word;² it denotes not the speaker, but what is spoken. Nor must it be considered as the same with $\delta \lambda\epsilon\gamma\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$, "He who is spoken of," the Promised One;³ for this is contrary to the usage of the term. Nor does $\delta \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ denote the preached word, of which Jesus Christ is the theme or subject-matter;⁴ for the Logos is identified with Christ Himself. Nor is the term used merely to denote the Lord Jesus Christ as the author of the Word; but He is the Word, because He is the manifestation of God, the source and origin of all the means by which God reveals Himself to His creatures; in short, the medium of communication between God and the world.⁵

In the prologue John states first the pre-existence, or rather the eternal existence of the Word: $\acute{\epsilon}\nu \alpha\rho\chi\eta\eta \eta\nu \delta \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$. It is admitted that the phrase $\acute{\epsilon}\nu \alpha\rho\chi\eta\eta$ may only denote "in the beginning of creation," as the reference is to the creation of the world as recorded in Genesis, equivalent to בְּרֵאשִׁית ; and hence may denote only the pre-existence of Christ; a dogma which is affirmed

¹ Compare John i. 1-3 with Gen. i. 1-3.

² Schleussner, Storr.

³ Beza, Ernesti, Tittmann.

⁴ Hofmann's *Schriftbeweis*, vol. i. pp. 101 ff. Similarly, Luthardt remarks that Jesus Christ is the fulness of that Word of God which was fragmentally manifested in the Prophets.

⁵ See Meyer's *Commentary on John*, vol. i. p. 60 (Eng. trans.).

throughout this Gospel (John iii. 13; vi. 62; viii. 58; xvii. 5). But the verb ἦν denotes that the Word did not then commence to exist, but was anterior to time, as in the personification of Wisdom, ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸ τοῦ τὴν γῆν ποιῆσαι (Prov. viii. 23, LXX.), and in our Lord's own words, πρὸ τοῦ τὸν κόσμον εἶναι (John xvii. 5); and hence by implication is eternal. But the Word had not only an existence before time, but existed as a distinct personality of the Godhead: καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν—existed in relation to or in communion with God (πρὸς), and hence was a Personality as distinguished from God. And this Word that was with God was God; καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. Θεός here must be used adjectively, denoting the divinity or divine nature of the Word; and there is no doubt that the distinct and unhesitating assertion of the divinity of Christ, His eternal Sonship, constituted the distinguishing feature in the teaching of the Fourth Gospel. These three statements—the eternal existence, the distinct personality, and the divinity of the Word—are summed up in the verse which follows: "The same (the Word who was God) was in the beginning with God." To this Word the creation of the world is ascribed: positively, "all things were made by Him;" and negatively, "and without Him was not anything made that hath been made." This, however, is not to the exclusion of the Almighty Father of all, as if there was any antagonism between God and the world; but the Word was the instrument (δι' αὐτοῦ) by which God made the world (πάντα ἐγένετο). He is the medium of communication between God and His creatures. The Word also is the source of all life, both natural and spiritual:

"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John i. 4). But the climax is reached by the incarnation of the Word: "And the Word became flesh¹ and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). According to these statements in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, the Lord Jesus Christ is the incarnation of the Word of God; He possesses two distinct natures, the human and the divine; He existed from all eternity with God; He was the Creator of the world; and He came down to this earth by the assumption of human nature.

But it is a legitimate question, Whence did John derive this view of the Logos as the medium or mediator between God and His creatures? or at least, Whence did he employ the term Logos as applicable to the divine nature of Christ? We derive here little light from the philosophy of the Greeks. The use of the term Logos, as a divine personality or relation, is not very frequent among the Greek philosophers. Heraclitus was the first in Hellenic philosophy who promulgated the doctrine of the Logos as the absolute reason. It does not constitute a prominent feature in the philosophy of Plato. The equivalent term employed by him is *σοφία* or *νους*. The Logos of Plato was nothing else, than the mind of God, the seat of the ideas, the eternal prototypes of all things (*ιδέαι*); consequently the Logos is God Himself, and not a distinct personality. Plato never spoke of the Reason of God (*ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ*) as

¹ The term here used is *σάρξ*, not *σῶμα*. By *σάρξ* is meant the whole human nature, soul and body; by *σῶμα* is meant the body as distinguished from the soul.

a distinct person. With the Stoics, the Logos, as the operative principle of the world, frequently occurs: He is the *anima mundi*; but at the same time, in accordance with their pantheistic notions, no personality is ascribed to Him. The Logos of the Greeks is an attribute of God or impersonal Reason, not the Word.¹

But it is the philosophy of Philo which is most closely related to the Johannine doctrine of the Logos; indeed, in the opinion of many theologians, the author of the Fourth Gospel accommodates his theology to the philosophical views of Philo. Philo, surnamed Judæus, was a contemporary of our Lord, being born probably twenty years before the Christian era, as he calls himself an old man in the year that Caligula was murdered (A.D. 40). He was a Jew by birth, and a native of Alexandria, in which city the Jews were so numerous that they constituted more than a fourth of the population. He belonged to an illustrious and aristocratic family. "During the reign of this Emperor (Caligula)," says Eusebius, "Philo became noted; a man distinguished for his learning, not only among his countrymen, the Jews, but also among foreigners. As to his origin, he was a descendant of the Hebrews, inferior to none at Alexandria in point of family and birth."² His brother, Alexander, was the Alabarch or political head of the Jews of Alexandria,³ who were governed by

¹ On the Logos of the Greeks, see Bigg's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 14; article "Logos" in *Encyclopædia Britannica*; Burton's *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 213-223.

² *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 4.

³ This Alexander was a man of great wealth, and a generous and devout Israelite. Josephus informs us that he overlaid nine of the gates of the Temple of Jerusalem with gold and silver.

their own laws, and possessed special privileges. It is generally supposed that Tiberius Alexander, the procurator of Judæa in succession to Fadus, and afterwards appointed by Nero governor of Egypt, was his nephew.¹ Philo appears to have spent nearly his whole life at Alexandria in the quiet and unobtrusive study of philosophy. Although a strict Jew, yet he became greatly enamoured with the philosophy of the Greeks. He was a counterpart of Apollos before his conversion: "A Jew, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures" (Acts xviii. 24). When the circumstances of the Jews became precarious, in consequence of the aggressive policy of Flaccus, the governor of Egypt, Philo, in consequence of his learning, eminence, and influence, was chosen chief of the embassy of the Jews to lay their complaints before the Emperor Caligula.²

Numerous works of Philo have survived the ravages of time. They are of a high moral tendency, and are chiefly an exposition of the sacred books of the Jews. "The author," says Eusebius, "who was copious in language, comprehensive in thought, sublime and elevated in his views of the Sacred Scriptures, has made his exposition of the sacred books equally distinguished for variety of matter and manner."³ Eusebius gives us a list of his books, most of which have come down to us. His principal works, in accordance with Schürer's valuable arrangement of them, are: Three chief works

¹ See Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography*: Alexander Tiberius.

² Josephus, *Ant.*, xviii. 8, 1; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 5.

³ *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 18.

on the Pentateuch, namely—(1) Questions and Solutions; (2) Allegorical Commentary on Genesis; (3) Delineation of the Mosaic Dispensation for non-Jews. Besides these, Philo wrote the following separate compositions: The Life of Moses; Against Flaccus; On the Embassy to Caius; and An Apology for the Jews.¹

In his philosophy Philo was a Jewish Gnostic, that is to say, he endeavoured to unite Judaism with Greek philosophy. His favourite master was Plato, whose works he made his chief study, and the spirit of whose philosophy he imbibed; hence the familiar saying, “Either Plato philonises or Philo platonises.” His system was eclectic, being composed of elements taken from Platonism, Stoicism, and Judaism.² He united together the ideas of Plato, the powers of the Stoics, and the angels of the Jews; all these he harmonised in his doctrine of the Logos. But whilst he was given to the study of Greek philosophy, he was above all things a Jew. He not only regarded the Jewish religion as inspired by God, but he gave it the pre-eminence above all the systems of heathen philosophy. He sought to prove that Greek philosophy had its roots in the Jewish religion, and that even Plato himself was a disciple of Moses. In the Pentateuch all philosophy was contained. “Philo,” observes Schaff, “who endeavoured to harmonise the Mosaic religion with Platonism, derived his Logos view from the Salmonic and later

¹ Schürer, *Jewish People before Christ*, Div. ii. vol. iii. p. 243 ff. The best edition of the works of Philo is by Mangey, London, 1742.

² There was also in his philosophy a mixture of Neo-Pythagorean doctrines. Clemens Alexandrinus calls him a Pythagorean, and Eusebius says, “He was a zealous follower of the sect of Plato and Pythagoras.”

Jewish doctrine of the personified Wisdom and Word of God, and combined it with the Platonic idea of *Nous*. The Logos is to him the embodiment of all divine powers and ideas—the ἄγγελοι of the Old Testament, the δυνάμεις and ἰδεαί of Plato.”¹ He was a Gnostic born out of due time—a Gnostic before the Gnostics.

In the philosophy of Philo, the Logos occupied a prominent place. The Logos is the embodiment of the ideas of Plato—the idea of the ideas (ἰδεα τῶν ἰδεῶν), and of the powers of the Stoics. He is “the angel of the Lord” of the Old Testament—the archangel (ὁ ἀρχάγγελος). In relation to God, he is the representative of God to the world; he is called the Son of God (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ), the First-begotten (πρωτόγονος), the second God (δεύτερος θεός), the shadow of God (σκιὰ θεοῦ). In relation to man, he is the ideal or archetypal man (ἀρχέτυπος ὁ κατ’ εἰκόνα ἄνθρωπος), the man of God (ὁ ἄνθρωπος θεοῦ). In relation to the world, he is the Creator (δι’ οὗ ὁ κόσμος κατεσκεύασθη), the instrument (ὄργανον) of all creation. Many of these appellations bear a close and striking resemblance to those used with reference to Christ by Paul, John, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.² The reason of this introduction of the idea of the Logos, and the stress laid upon it, is that Philo, with most of the Greek philosophers, regarded matter as inherently corrupt—a principle which was also common to all the Gnostic heresies, so that there could be no direct contact between God and the world; that there was a dualism of God and the world. Hence,

¹ Schaff’s *Encyclopædia*, vol. ii. p. 1335.

² See Westcott’s Introduction to his Commentary, *Speaker’s Bible*, vol. ii., Introduction, p. 16; Alford’s *Greek Testament*, vol. i. p. 640.

then, God could not be the immediate Creator of the world ; there must be some intermediate being or beings between God and matter, like the æons of the Gnostics. Before God created the world and all things contained in it, there were spiritual types or ideas, according to the fashion of which all things were made, and these types or ideas were concentrated in the Logos. In all probability Philo chose the term Logos, instead of Wisdom or the Platonic term Nous, because this term was common among the Jewish writers in his day to express either by circumlocution God Himself, or some principle intermediate between God and matter. In all this there is undoubtedly an approach to Scriptural truth—a foreshadow of the doctrine of the Logos as promulgated by John.

But there are essential points of difference between the Logos of John and the Logos of Philo, which demonstrate that the Johannine doctrine of the Logos was not derived from Philo, whatever may have been its derivation. There are especially four distinct points of difference.

1. With Philo the idea of the Logos varies greatly ; there is an indefiniteness in the conception, but in general it is impersonal, an attribute or quality of God ; whereas with John there is no ambiguity ; the Logos is a distinct hypostasis or personality. It is much disputed by Biblical scholars whether the Logos of Philo is a person at all, or a mere attribute or relation of God, like the Christ of the Sabellians. Gfrörer, Dähne, and Lücke maintain that Philo's Logos is a distinct personality ; whilst the opposite opinion is asserted by Burton, Dorner, Meyer, and Liddon. But whatever opinion we adopt, it is cer-

tain that Philo gives a very uncertain sound. There are indeed strong expressions of personality, but when these are analysed, they fade away into mere personifications or allegorical expressions. "I maintain," says Burton, "that Philo, when speaking as a Jew or a Platonist of the Reason of God, never imagined that it was a person distinct from God. According to Philo, God and the Reason of God were the same. He was God as to his essence, but as to his attributes or operations he was Reason or Mind."¹ "It cannot be proved," remarks Dorner, "that the Logos is with Philo a special or distinct essence or mediator between God and the world, an hypostasis distinct as is God."² So also Meyer observes: "Philo's conception of the Logos resolves itself into the sum-total and full exercise of the divine energies; so that God, so far as He reveals Himself, is called Logos, while the Logos, so far as he reveals God, is called God."³ With Philo the Logos is a mere hazy expression for the Reason of God: it represents the Nous of Plato, not a hypostasis of the Godhead. On the other hand, the Logos of John is a distinct personality: He was with God, and was manifested to the world in the person of Jesus Christ. Thus, especially in the Apocalypse, in the description of our Lord as a mighty Conqueror, the personality of the Logos is distinctly asserted: "And He is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood; and His name is called the Logos of God" (Rev. xix. 13).

¹ Burton's *Bampton Lectures*.

² Dorner, *Entwicklungsgesch. des Lehre von der Person Christi*, i. 30, translation, vol. i. pp. 22-30.

³ Meyer's *Commentary on John*, vol. i. p. 64, translation.

2. There is no connection in Philo's philosophy between the Logos and the Messiah. In all the works of Philo there are but slight traces of the Messianic idea.¹ "Philo," observes Dorner, "did not participate in the warm desires and hopes which filled the heart of the believing Jew. The idea of the Messiah has become to him a dead coal." The only trace of Messianic hopes in his writings is that he looks forward to the restoration of the scattered Jews from all parts of the earth to Palestine by a divine appearance, recognisable only to the just. He does not, however, identify this divine appearance (*ὁψις*) either with the Logos or with the Messiah. But it is evident from the prologue of John that the Logos is the Messiah: He who was in the beginning with God and was God, was manifested unto the world in the person of Jesus Christ. The Being, who is described in the beginning of the chapter, is the same who is afterwards spoken of as the Christ or the Messiah. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John i. 17, 18).

3. The incarnation of the Logos is opposed to the philosophy of Philo, while it is the cardinal point with John.—On account of his view of the evil nature of matter and the impossibility of God's contact with it, Philo could have no idea of a divine incarnation; such an idea must be abhorrent to the whole system

¹ There is here a remarkable difference between the later Jewish works in the Hebrew language and those in the Greek language. In the former the Messianic idea is prevalent, whereas in the latter it is almost wanting.

of his philosophy, as it was to the philosophy of the Gnostics. Hence any incarnation could only be Docetic; there could be no reality, but only a form or appearance. But with John the incarnation of the Logos is an essential principle. "The Logos became flesh and dwelt among us."

4. With Philo the function of the Logos is the creation of the world; with John it is not only the creation, but the redemption of the world. Philo certainly frequently asserts that the Logos is the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the world; and on this point there is a remarkable correspondence between him and the Evangelist. But here Philo stops; he has in his philosophy little idea of sin. His writings are in the highest degree moral; he speaks of virtue throughout, but the virtue, of which he speaks, is that which a man may attain by philosophy—a high degree of intellectual freedom. But he does not realise the fallen and corrupt state of human nature, and hence the idea of redemption, not from intellectual darkness, but from moral evil, has no place in his philosophy. "Philo," observes Liddon, "is everywhere too little alive to the presence and consequences of moral evil. The history of Israel, instead of displaying a long, earnest struggle between the goodness of God and the wickedness of men, interests Philo only as a complex allegory, which, by a versatile exposition, may be made to illustrate various ontological problems. The priesthood and the sacrificial system, instead of pointing to man's profound need of pardon and expiation, are resolved by him into the symbols of certain cosmical facts or theosophic theories.

Philo, therefore, scarcely hints at the Messiah, although he says much concerning the Jewish expectation of a brighter future; he knows no means of reconciliation, of redemption; he sees not the need of them."¹ With John, on the contrary, the redemption of the world is the chief function of the Logos. He came to save His people from their sins. In the Logos of Philo we have the Creator, but in the Logos of John we have both the Creator and the Redeemer.

That John derived the term Logos from the philosophy of Philo and applied it to Christ as the true Logos, as many scholars affirm, may possibly be the case, though it is extremely doubtful; but certainly he did not derive the doctrine of the Logos from Philo; it is perfectly distinct; indeed, in many points, antagonistic. "The idea," observes Harnack, "of the relation of God and the world in the Fourth Gospel is not Philonic; therefore the Logos doctrine there, in essential points, is not that of Philo."² John's doctrine of the Logos can only be referred either to the direct teaching of Christ, when He was in this world, and instructed His immediate disciples in the mysteries of His kingdom, or to divine revelation, to some of those "many things" (John xvi. 12) which, after our Lord's ascension, the Spirit of truth was to reveal unto His disciples.

The germs of the Johannine doctrine of the Logos are not to be found in Philonic philosophy, but in the Old Testament; the doctrine is much more Palestinian

¹ Liddon's *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 68, 69.

² *Dogmengeschichte*, p. 79.

than Alexandrian. In the Old Testament the creation of the world is attributed to the simple Word of God. Thus in the narrative of creation God speaks, and the effect follows. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light;" "Let there be a firmament, and there was a firmament." And there is a generally acknowledged reference in the words, "In the beginning was the Word," to the first words in Genesis, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." "By the Word of God," says the Psalmist, "were the heavens made" (Ps. xxxiii. 6. See also Ps. cvii. 20, cxlvii. 15; Isa. lv. 10, 11).

So also there are traces in the Old Testament of a distinction of Persons in the Godhead, of a mediator or medium of communication between God and His creatures. The revelations of God to the Jews were not made directly by God, but by means of a mysterious being called the Angel of the Lord, or the Jehovah Angel (מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה), who frequently appeared to the Patriarchs and guided the Israelites in the wilderness, who assumed to himself divine prerogatives, and was called by divine names. Thus the Angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar in the wilderness, when she fled from her mistress, Sarah: "And she called the name of Jehovah that spake to her, Thou art a God that seeth" (Gen. xvi. 13). The Angel of the Lord appeared to Abraham, when he interceded with God for Sodom; "And Abraham," we read, "stood yet before Jehovah" (Gen. xviii. 22). The Angel of the Lord interfered, when Abraham was about to offer his son in these words: "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing

thou hast not withheld thy son, thy only son, from me" (Gen. xxii. 12). The Angel of the Lord appeared to Jacob when he was alarmed at the approach of Esau: "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel; for he said, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (Gen. xxxii. 30). The Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush, and announced Himself to be the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob (Exod. iii. 6). The Angel of the Lord guided the Israelites in the wilderness: "Behold I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee by the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Take ye heed of him and hearken to his voice; provoke him not, for he will not pardon your transgression; for My name is in him" (Exod. xxiii. 20, 21). The Angel of the Lord appeared to Joshua as the captain of the Lord's host, and demanded from him the same reverence as he did from Moses at the burning bush: "And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant?" (Josh. v. 14). The Angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his wife, and revealed himself by the name of Wonderful: "And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God" (Judges xiii. 22). In the prophecies of Zechariah there is frequent mention of the Angel of the Lord: he appears as the Lord's messenger assisting Joshua the high priest in the great work of rebuilding the Temple, and contending with Satan, the great enemy of God and man. And in the prophecies of Malachi the Angel of the Covenant is announced as the Lord who shall

appear in His Temple: "Behold I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me, and the Lord whom you seek shall suddenly come to His Temple, and the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in" (Mal. iii. 1). There are various opinions as to who is meant by the Angel of the Lord. Some¹ suppose that he is a created angel who uses the name of God and speaks with His authority, just as an ambassador represents his sovereign; others,² that he is not a person, but, like the Shekinah, the visible symbol of the presence of God; and others,³ that he is the Son of God, the Divine Logos, who afterwards appeared incarnate in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. But whatever opinion we may adopt, there are in these theophanies traces of a medium of communication, or of a mediator between God and man—a foreshadowing of the Logos, who was with God and was God.⁴

Divine Wisdom (חֵכֶמָה) is also frequently personified in the Old Testament, as if it were a divine personality in the Godhead—the Logos of the Fourth Gospel. Thus in the Book of Job, Wisdom is said to be undiscoverable by men, to be understood only by God, to be the Eternal Reason by which He foresaw the arrangements of the world (Job xxviii. 12–28). But especially in

¹ Hofmann, Meyer, Dörner, Delitzsch, Pusey.

² Rosenmüller, De Wette.

³ Nitzsch, Lange, Stier, Hengstenberg, Pye Smith, Alford.

⁴ See, on "the Angel of the Lord," Hengstenberg's *Christology*, vol. i. p. 107 ff., and vol. iv. p. 282 ff.; Pye Smith's *Scripture Testimony*, vol. i. pp. 296–331; Stanley Leathes' *Witness of the Old Testament to Christ*; Liddon's *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 51–55; Gloag's *Messianic Prophecies*, pp. 351–361.

the Book of Proverbs there is a striking personification of Wisdom: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. . . . When He established the heavens, I was there: when He set a circle upon the face of the deep, . . . there I was by Him as a master-workman: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him: rejoicing in His habitable earth: and my delight was with the sons of men" (Prov. viii. 22-31). Here Wisdom is said to be eternal, to be always with God, to have assisted Him in the creation of the world, to be the object of God's eternal joy, and to take a loving interest in the human race: in short, Wisdom is described in the Book of Proverbs as the Logos is described by John. It may indeed be affirmed that all this is a mere personification of Wisdom, just as charity is personified by Paul; but the personification is very striking when viewed in its application to Jesus Christ, who is the Wisdom of God (1 Cor. i. 24); and it would appear that Christ applies this personification of Wisdom to Himself, when He says, "Wisdom is justified of all her children" (Luke vii. 35).

The same personification of Wisdom is met with in the Apocryphal books which are of Jewish origin, and were written before the advent of Christ; *σοφία* is the medium of communication between God and man, and the instrument by which God works, and thus is equivalent to the *λόγος* of John. Thus, in the Book of Ecclesiasticus or Sirach (B.C. 190-170), Wisdom is said to have its eternal abode with God: "All wisdom cometh

from the Lord, and is with Him for ever. Wisdom hath been created before all things, and the understanding of prudence from eternity. The Word of God (*ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ*) is the fountain of Wisdom" (Eccles. i. 1, 45). And in the Book of Wisdom, or the Wisdom of Solomon (first century B.C.), Wisdom is said to sit by the throne of God, to have been present with God when He made the world, to be acquainted with all the works of God, to be the breath of the power of God, and a pure influence flowing from the glory of the Almighty.¹ And in a remarkable passage, in the same book, the Word of God is thus personified: "Thine almighty Word leapt down from heaven out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of a land of destruction."² It is admitted that there is an indefiniteness and ambiguity in all these expressions, but they anticipate many of the elements of the Johannine doctrine of the Logos, preparations in the providence of God for the announcement of the great doctrine that the Logos was made flesh and dwelt among us, like the rays of light darting through the great darkness, the precursors of the rising sun.

But especially in the Jewish Targums, which, although published after the Christian era, yet, being of purely Jewish origin, are acknowledged to contain the current language of the theology of the times of our Lord, the phrase "Word of the Lord" (*מִימְרָא יְהוָה*, Memra Jehovah) is of frequent occurrence. According to Edersheim, it occurs in the Targum Onkelos one hundred and seventy-nine times, in the Jerusalem Targum ninety-nine times,

¹ Wisdom ix. 4, 9; vii. 25.

² Wisdom xviii. 15.

and in the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan three hundred and twenty-one times.¹ Thus we have the following phrases :—"The voice of the Word of God spake ;" "The Lord protected Noah by His Word when he entered the ark ;" "God made a covenant between Abraham and His Word ;" "Hagar gave thanks and prayed in the name of the Word of the Lord ;" "The Word of the Lord was with Ishmael in the wilderness ;" "Jacob made a covenant that the Word of the Lord should be his God ;" "The Word spoke with Moses from off the mercy-seat ;" "Moses at Sinai brought forth the people to meet the Word of the Lord ;" "The Shekinah of the Word of the Lord will go before thee, and His Word will be thy help."²

In the Book of Enoch, generally admitted to have been written before the Christian era, the Word is a title given to the Messiah. The Messiah is there represented as a white bull who receives the adoration of all cattle ; and it is said : "And the first bull was the Word, and this Word was a powerful animal which had large black horns on its head."³ The phrase, then, "the Word of God," as a divine personality or a relation of the Divinity, was current among the Jews at the time that John wrote his Gospel.

It is evident that the term Logos, employed by John, was familiar to the circle of readers to whom his Gospel was primarily addressed. He commences abruptly with the words, "In the beginning was the Logos." He gives no explanation of the term he employs, but evidently

¹ *Life and Times of Jesus*, vol. i. p. 47.

² See Etherage on *The Targums of the Pentateuch*.

³ Dillmann's *Das Buch Henoch*, xc. 38, p. 65.

presupposes that it was already known to his readers; and the term, as we have seen, was not unknown to the Jews, independently of the philosophy of Philo.¹

Probably, also, there was a polemic reason for John's use of the term; as it may have been employed by the Gnostics, against whom he wrote his First Epistle. John wished to draw the attention of his hearers from the false to the true Gnosis—to the knowledge of God and of His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, he asserts, is the true Logos, about whom these heretics in their ignorance discourse. "The choice of the term *ὁ λόγος*," observes Mansell, "as a designation of Christ, the assertion of the eternity and proper deity and incarnation of the Logos, have a direct relation and antagonism to the Jewish Gnosticism of Philo, as well as to the Christian Gnosticism of Cerinthus."²

Considering the philosophical speculations of the Asiatic Greeks, and the popularity of the philosophy of Philo among the Hellenistic Jews, it is by no means improbable that Philonism was known to John at the time when he wrote his Gospel, as the philosophy of Philo was promulgated fully half a century before this. Ephesus, where John resided, was one of the great seats of Oriental philosophy, and doubtless the doctrine of the Divine Logos was there promulgated, and the phrase the Word of God was known. And although we do not go so far as to affirm, with Bigg, that "there can be no doubt that John acquired from Alexandria that conception of the Word, which first brought Christian theology

¹ It was probably also familiar to the first readers of John's Gospel from its use in the previous oral teaching of the Apostle.

² *The Gnostic Heresies*, p. 75.

within the sphere of metaphysics,"¹ there is nothing contrary to the idea of inspiration to suppose that John was led to employ the term Logos, as one that was familiar in the language of Jewish and Greek philosophy, to express the divinity and incarnation of Christ.

The doctrine of the Logos frequently occurs in the writings of the Fathers, especially of Justin Martyr.² They derived their notions concerning it from the Gospel of John; and, in contrast to Philonism, they asserted the incarnation of the Logos in the person of Jesus Christ. The Logos also appears in the Gnostic writings, but among them as an æon distinct from Christ. Of course, also, the incarnation of the Logos was foreign and alien to their systems. According to Valentinus, whose system was the most elaborate of all the Gnostic systems, as stated by Irenæus,³ the Logos was the third in descent from the primary source. The æons emanated in pairs; the first were Bythos and Sigé; the second, Nous and Aletheia; the third, Logos and Zoe. But there is no identification in the system of Valentinus of the Logos with Christ; Christ was a distinct and separate æon.⁴ Certainly these systems of the Gnostics are instances of that philosophy and vain deceit against which Paul warned the Colossians, and into which men, in the present as well as in the past, fall, when they endeavour to force the doctrines of the Gospel into an agreement with the speculations of philosophy.

¹ Bigg's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 24.

² See Purves's *Testimony of Justin Martyr*, pp. 148-156.

³ *Adv. Hær.*, i. 1, 1.

⁴ See Mansel's *Gnostic Heresies*, p. 171; Burton, *Bampton Lectures*, note 94, pp. 560-563; Milman's *History of Christianity*, vol. ii. pp. 69-73.

DISSERTATION II.

THE DAY OF OUR LORD'S DEATH.

LITERATURE.—This subject is more or less fully discussed in Neander's *Life of Christ*, § 265; Wieseler's *Chronologie Synop. der vier Evang.*, Sect. v. § 3, translation, pp. 353 ff.; Bleek's *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, § 68 and § 72, translation, vol. i. pp. 189, 193; Farrar's *Life of Christ*, Excursus x. "Was the Lord's Supper an actual Passover?" Edersheim's *Life and Times of Jesus*, vol. ii. p. 479 ff.; Meyer's *Commentary on St. John*, on John xiii. 1 and xviii. 28; Caspari's *Introduction to the Life of Christ*, translation, pp. 192-215; Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, article "Passover;" Sanday's *Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 201-211; Godet's *St. John*, vol. iii. pp. 287-307, "Of the Day of our Lord's Death;" Salmon's *Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 303-306; Davidson's *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, vol. ii. pp. 369 ff.; Westcott's *Introduction to the Gospels*, pp. 314-321.

THE precise day of the month, on which our Lord was crucified, was, and still is, a vexed question among Biblical critics, the solution of which has not yet been discovered. The point of dispute is, Whether the day of our Lord's death was the 14th Nisan, that is, the preparation day before the Passover, or the 15th Nisan, the Paschal day itself. On this point there is a real or supposed difference between the accounts given us in the Synoptics and that given us in the Fourth Gospel.

In order to understand the dispute, an acquaintance with the time at which the Jews observed their Passover, in the days of our Lord, is necessary. This great festival,

instituted in commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, commenced on the evening of the 14th Nisan or Abib, which was the anniversary of their deliverance. According to the original institution, as given in Exod. xii. 1-20, it was to last for seven days, during which period the children of Israel were commanded to eat unleavened bread (Exod. xii. 6, 7, 19, xiii. 1-10; Lev. xxiii. 5-14; Num. xxviii. 16-25). It would, however, appear from a statement in Josephus,¹ that in the days of our Lord the period of observance was extended to eight days, the day of preparation, or the 14th Nisan, being added to the original seven. It must also be remembered that the Jews reckoned their days from evening to evening, or rather from sunset to sunset. Hence the evening of the 14th Nisan is a somewhat ambiguous term, but it is evident, from the Mosaic account of the institution, that it denotes the close of the 14th, that is, according to our reckoning, from three to sunset. On the 14th Nisan the work of preparation began; the heads of families searched for and put away leaven from their houses. The Paschal lamb was slain "between the evenings" (בֵּין הָעֶרְבַּיִם), (Exod. xii. 6; Lev. xxii. 5; Num. ix. 3, 5), that is, as Josephus informs us, between the ninth and eleventh hour, or between three and five, according to our reckoning.² The 14th Nisan was originally not reckoned as one of the Paschal days; it was the day of preparation for the Passover,³ the day on

¹ Josephus, *Ant.*, ii. 15, 1; *Bell. Jud.*, v. 3, 1.

² Josephus, *Bell. Jud.*, vi. 9, 3. Others interpret it between sunset and dark, or between five and seven. Wieseler's *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*, p. 316, translation.

³ παρασκευὴ τοῦ πάσχα, John xix. 14.

which the Paschal lamb was slain and prepared. Among the Jews, work was permitted to be done on that day, as the Passover proper did not commence until the evening; whereas among the Galileans, we are informed, the whole day was kept sacred.¹ The next day, or the 15th Nisan, was the great day of the feast. At its commencement, in the evening, the Paschal lamb was eaten. This day and the last day were regarded as holy Sabbaths to the Lord, when no work was done (Exod. xii. 16). The intervening days of the feast, it would appear, were ordinary days, and the only difference between them and other days was that certain special offerings were made and unleavened bread was eaten (Num. xxviii. 18-25). But, besides these special offerings, there arose among the Jews, connected with the Passover another festival called in the Talmud Chagigah (חַגִּיגָה, *i.e.*, "festivity"), consisting of free-will offerings, and which might be partaken of on any day of the feast, but generally in the evening or close of the 15th Nisan, or the Paschal day;² so that the Passover was partaken of at the commencement, and the Chagigah at the close of the same day.

Now, keeping in view the distinction between these two days, the 14th and 15th Nisan—the one the day of preparation and the other the Paschal day—the one a day on which work might be done, the other a sacred day in which work was forbidden—we come to the discussion of the question, On which of these days was it that our Lord was crucified? According to John's

¹ Caspari's *Introduction to the Life of Christ*, p. 193.

² On the Chagigah, see Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. ii. p. 717; Caspari's *Introduction to the Life of Christ*, pp. 193, 194.

Gospel this occurred before the Passover, or on the 14th Nisan. In this Gospel we have the following five distinct intimations of date :—(1.) “Now, before the feast of the Passover (*πρὸ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα*), Jesus, knowing that His hour was come” (John xiii. 1). The natural inference from this is, that the last supper occurred before the commencement of the Paschal feast. (2.) “Some thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus said to him, Buy what things we have need of for the feast” (John xiii. 29). From this it would appear that the feast had not commenced, and that the preparation for it had to be made; besides, it is also intimated that purchases could be made, which could not be done on the Paschal day. (3.) “They themselves entered not into the palace, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover” (John xviii. 28). This intimates that the chief priests had not yet partaken of the Passover, and that consequently the day was the 14th, and not the 15th Nisan. (4.) “Now it was the Preparation of the Passover” (John xix. 14). This phrase is most naturally taken to mean the 14th Nisan, the day of preparation, when all leaven was removed, and when the Paschal lamb was slain and prepared. (5.) “The Jews therefore, because it was the Preparation, that the bodies should not remain on the cross upon the Sabbath (for the day of that Sabbath was a high day)” (John xix. 31). Here the term “the Preparation” (*παρασκευῇ*) may denote the day before the Sabbath, but the parenthetic clause, “for the day of that Sabbath was a high day,” intimates that there was a special importance connected with that peculiar

Sabbath, which would be the case if the Passover on that year coincided with the Sabbath; in other words, if the Friday on which our Lord was crucified was the day of Preparation, or 14th Nisan. From all these intimations the natural conclusion is, that our Lord was crucified on the day before the Passover. Thus then, according to John, our Lord was crucified on Friday the 14th Nisan, remained in the tomb on Saturday the 15th Nisan (the Paschal day), and rose from the dead on Sunday the 16th Nisan.¹

On the other hand, when we turn to the Synoptists, the natural inference in reading their accounts is, that our Lord and His disciples partook of the Passover when He instituted the Holy Communion. On this point the testimony of the three Synoptical Gospels coincides. Matthew tells us that on the first day of unleavened bread (14th Nisan), our Lord sent the message to a friend in Jerusalem, "My time is at

¹ The following table of events is given by Sanday :—

| Julian Day. | Jewish Day. |
|---|--|
| <i>Thursday</i> —6 p.m. | 14TH NISAN BEGAN. |
| Midnight | The Last Supper, Gethsemane. Examination before Annas and Caiaphas. |
| <i>Friday</i> — <i>πρωί</i> 9 a.m. (Mark), 6th hour (John) | Examination before Pilate. Sentence pronounced. |
| 12-3 p.m. | Crucifixion. |
| 3-5 p.m. | Slaughter of the Paschal Lamb. |
| 6 p.m. | 15TH NISAN BEGAN. |
| <i>Saturday</i> — | The Passover. Great day of the Feast. |
| 6 p.m. | Jesus in the grave. |
| | 16TH NISAN BEGAN. |

—*Authorship of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 202. See *Caspari*, p. 199.

hand; I keep the Passover at thy house with My disciples;" and that the disciples went and made ready the Passover (Matt. xxvi. 17-19). Mark informs us that this was "the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Passover" (Mark xiv. 12). And the statements of Luke are still more explicit. He tells us that "the day of unleavened bread came, on which the Passover must be sacrificed;" that Jesus "sent Peter and John, saying, Go and make ready for us the Passover, that we may eat;" that they should say to the man, in whose house they were to eat, "Where is the guest-chamber where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples?" that "the disciples went and made ready the Passover;" and that Jesus said to them, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 7-15). According to the Synoptists, then, it would appear that our Lord partook of the Passover with His disciples; that consequently He was crucified on the Paschal day, the 15th Nisan; that He lay in the tomb on the weekly Sabbath, the 16th Nisan; and that He rose from the dead on Sunday, the 17th Nisan.

Thus it would appear that, according to John, on the day of our Lord's death the Passover had not been eaten; whilst, according to the Synoptists, Christ had already partaken of the Passover with His disciples. It is to be observed that there is a perfect agreement among the four Evangelists regarding the day of the week on which our Lord was crucified; that day was Friday, the preparation day before the Jewish Sabbath. All agree that on Saturday, or the Jewish Sabbath, our Lord

remained in the grave, and that He rose from the dead on the Sunday, or the first day of the week. Bishop Westcott indeed suggests that Thursday might be the day of the crucifixion;¹ but this is a mere suggestion, unsupported by evidence, at variance with the Gospel statements (see Mark xv. 42), and, so far as we are aware, adopted by no other writer.² But whilst there is this agreement as to the day of the week, there is an apparent disagreement as to the day of the month; according to John, this was the Preparation day, or 14th Nisan; whilst according to the Synoptists, it was the Paschal day, or 15th Nisan. The question which meets us is, How are these apparently discrepant accounts to be reconciled? Which of these days is correct? Was our Lord crucified on the 14th or on the 15th Nisan? Accordingly critics are not here agreed, and various modes of reconciliation have been advanced.³

I. The majority of Biblical students assume the correctness of John's account that our Lord was crucified on the 14th Nisan, or the preparation day before the Passover.⁴ They assert that this is the account of an eye-witness, of one who must have known the precise day, who was interested in recording it, and whose intimations of date cannot be explained away. They

¹ Westcott's *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, p. 321.

² Schneckenburger is said to have affirmed that our Lord was crucified on Wednesday, and lay four days in the grave.

³ For these methods of reconciliation, see Liddon's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 224.

⁴ This is the opinion of De Wette, Neander, Bleek, Ustersi, Ewald, Sieffert, Meyer, Brückner, Hase, Caspari, Weiss, Godet; and among English theologians, of Alford, Ellicott, Farrar, Sanday, Plummer, Westcott, Lias, and Reynolds.

further think that this opinion is proved, because the events mentioned in the Gospels could not have occurred on the Paschal day. That day was a day of peculiar sanctity, on which all work was forbidden, except that connected with the preparation of food (Exod. xii. 16); none were permitted even to go out of their houses whilst the Paschal supper was being eaten. The priests could not have arrested Christ on that day, nor have gone through the form of a judicial trial; nor would our Lord have been put to death on so sacred a day. Herod, we are informed, deferred the execution of Peter until after the Passover. "Those were the days of unleavened bread," the Paschal feast; "intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people" (Acts xii. 3, 4). Even in the Synoptic accounts there are intimations that the day of the crucifixion was not a sacred day, but a day on which work might be done. Simon the Cyrenian, it is observed, was coming out of the country (Luke xxiii. 26), probably returning from the labours of the field. Joseph of Arimathea bought fine linen for the interment of Jesus (Mark xv. 46), which he could not have done if that day was a holy day, for all buying and selling were forbidden. Besides, this accounts for the extreme haste of the crucifixion, in order that it might be completed before the Passover commenced. Our Lord was judicially examined by the Sanhedrim, tried by Pilate, brought before Herod, condemned, and crucified on the same day; and the Jews were anxious that the bodies should be taken down from the cross, because the next day was a high day, a peculiar Sabbath among the Jews. Further, it is asserted that this opinion best corresponds

with the declarations of St. Paul. That Apostle, in speaking of the Lord's Supper, intimates that it took the place of the Passover, and he represents Christ as the true Paschal Lamb: "For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ" (1 Cor. v. 7); words which would receive their full significance were our Lord crucified at the very time that the Paschal lambs were being slain in the Temple, which would actually be the case were the afternoon of the 14th Nisan the period of the execution.¹ And in his account of the Lord's Supper, Paul says that it was instituted "on the night on which He was betrayed." But if it occurred on the night on which the Paschal lamb was slain, would he not rather have alluded to that symbolical event?²

In order to reconcile the date given us by John with the statements of the Synoptists, some suppose that our Lord and His disciples anticipated the Passover, because He wanted to partake of it with His disciples before He suffered.³ The anticipation of the day is supposed to be hinted at in the Synoptic Gospels. Our Lord said, "My time is at hand; I keep the Passover at thy house with My disciples" (Matt. xxvi. 18). As if He said, "It is my intention to keep the Passover this evening; I will not defer it until to-morrow, the proper Paschal day, for to-morrow will be too late; My time is at hand (*ὁ καιρός μου ἐγγύς ἐστι*)—the time when

¹ Our Lord, according to the Synoptists, hung upon the cross six hours before His death, from the third hour (9 A.M.) to the ninth hour (3 P.M.) (Mark xv. 25, 33, 34); and it was from the ninth to the eleventh hour that the Paschal lambs were sacrificed.)

² 1 Cor. xi. 23. According to Neander, attention was first drawn to these Pauline passages by Lücke in the *Göttinger Anzeiger*.

³ This opinion is adopted by Grotius, Kahnis, Weiss, Godet, Ellicott.

I shall be offered up as the true Passover." So also He said to His disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15). "I have earnestly wished to partake of this Passover¹ with you before My death; and therefore I do not defer it until to-morrow." As Neander observes, "Jesus foresaw that He would have to leave His disciples before the proper Passover, and determined to give a peculiar import to His last meal with them, to place it in a peculiar relation to the Jewish Passover, as the Christian covenant-meal was to take the place of that of the Old Testament."² He, who as Son of Man was the Lord of the Sabbath and had authority to change the day, was also the Lord of the Passover, and had power to alter the day of its celebration.³ The Lord's Supper was now to take the place of the Passover, and therefore it was fit and proper that the last typical Passover should be partaken of by Christ and His disciples on the day of the institution of the Supper. Besides, the vast multitude of lambs, amounting to several thousands,⁴ which were slain in the Temple, and the time necessarily occupied in doing so, may have occasioned a difference of time in the partaking of the Passover. In consequence of this, there may have been some irregularity in the time of eating the Passover, or

¹ Observe the emphasis, τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα.

² Neander's *Life of Christ*, pp. 425-427, Bohn's edition.

³ "If," says Godet, "Jesus could boldly declare Himself the Lord of the Sabbath—and the transference of the Sabbath-day from Saturday to Sunday in His Church has proved that this was no vain word—how should He not also be the Lord of the Passover?"

⁴ Josephus mentions the number of lambs sacrificed to be 256,500, which is surely an exaggeration. *Bell. Jud.*, vi. 9, 3.

at least of slaying the lambs, so that this anticipation of the Passover might have occurred. "There is now," observes Weiss, "no possibility of proving that the custom of the feast made it permissible to offer the sacrifice and to partake of the supper a day before the actual Passover, but it is rendered highly probable by the apparent impossibility of slaying all the Paschal lambs on one day. In that case Jesus partook of the Passover with His disciples on the 13th Nisan, and in His own free way observed those customs connected with the observance which possessed any significance for Him, or which He could invest with a new and higher meaning."¹

This solution is exceedingly plausible, exposed to fewer objections, and removes many of the difficulties in the accounts of the Evangelists. Jesus and His disciples partook of the Passover, according to the accounts given us by the Synoptists, but it was by anticipation and before the legal Passover, according to the account given us by John. But it is difficult to imagine that the lamb could be sacrificed before the appointed time; there is no intimation in the Jewish records that this was done, notwithstanding the multitude of sacrificial animals; and if this was not permissible, there could be no anticipation of the Passover. Besides, the above explanation only removes half the difficulty. If the Synoptists only stated that Jesus ate the Passover, the difficulty might be solved by the supposition that He anticipated the rite; but as they also state that He gave orders for its observance on the first day of unleavened bread, 14th Nisan, the day on

¹ Weiss' *Life of Christ*, vol. iii. p. 280.

which, according to John, He was crucified, a difficulty still remains.¹

Another plausible hypothesis is that advanced by Bishop Westcott, who supposes that the Passover partaken of by Christ and His disciples mentioned by the Synoptists was not the actual Passover, but the Feast of Preparation, which occurred on the 14th Nisan.² The time is designated by the Synoptists as "the first day of unleavened bread, when they sacrificed the Passover,"³ consequently the 14th Nisan, when the eating of unleavened bread commenced, and when the Paschal lamb was sacrificed. This day was observed by the Galileans—and our Lord and His disciples were Galileans—as a holy day, and was in the time of our Lord reckoned as the first of the Paschal days. It is supposed that the Synoptists intimated that it was at the commencement of this day—that is, according to the Jewish reckoning, the evening at the beginning of the 14th Nisan—that Christ sat down with His disciples. Besides, it is to be observed that in the account of the last supper by the Synoptists there is no mention of any Paschal rites. One, on reading it, would not guess that it was the feast of the Passover. Jesus gives to His disciples bread and wine, but there is no allusion to the lamb, the eating of which constituted the chief part of the feast, nor is there any mention of the bitter herbs; it rather resembles a common meal of which our Lord

¹ But to this it may be answered that Jesus and His disciples might have partaken of the Passover on the evening which commenced the 14th Nisan.

² Westcott's *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, p. 318.

³ τῇ πρώτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν ἀζυμῶν ὅτε τὸ πάσχα ἔθουον, Mark xiv. 12.

partook with His disciples. According to this explanation, we are mistaken when we affirm that our Lord partook of the Paschal lamb with His disciples. "The evening of the supper," observes Bishop Westcott, "would thus be, as John represents it, the evening at the beginning of 14th Nisan. The same day after sunrise next morning is rightly described as a preparation day, 'the Preparation of the Passover.'"¹

Such an explanation is ingenious, but it does not correspond with the natural meaning of the language employed by the Synoptists. Although there is no mention in their accounts of the Paschal lamb, yet the evident impression which their words leave is, that our Lord actually partook of the Passover with His disciples. The disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Passover?" Jesus sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and make ready for us the Passover that we may eat." And the message which He sent to the proprietor of the upper room was, "The Master saith, My time is at hand: I will keep the Passover at thy house with My disciples." These words appear distinctly to assert the fact that Jesus did eat the Passover; and to explain them as if they meant only that our Lord partook of a preparatory feast, but not of the actual Passover, appears to be a perversion of their meaning.

¹ Westcott, *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, p. 316. The Rev. J. J. Liss supposes that the solution of the problem is found in the fact that the Lord's Supper was regarded by the primitive Church as the Passover of the New Testament, and that it was of the Christian, and not of the Jewish Passover that the Synoptists speak. See also Plummer's *Commentary on St. John* in the Cambridge Series, p. 380.

Other critics¹ solve the difficulty by cutting the knot; they affirm that the Synoptists, in their account of our Lord's partaking of the Passover with His disciples, were in error. They admit the discrepancy between the accounts of the Synoptists and that of John; they do not attempt to remove it, but assert that the mistake was on the part of the Synoptists. This mistake arose in a natural manner. According to the testimony both of the Synoptists and of Paul, our Lord, at the evening meal of which He partook with His disciples, instituted the Holy Communion to be a perpetual memorial of His death. This ordinance was to take the place of the Jewish Passover in the Christian Church; it was the Christian Passover, the memorial of our deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan. Hence, being so intimately connected with the Passover, it was natural to suppose that at the time of the institution of the Holy Communion our Lord and His disciples partook of the Passover, more especially if Jesus had spoken concerning the Passover as about to be superseded by the feast which He was to institute. John, accordingly, here corrects the error of the Synoptists.² This, however, is a violent mode of solving the difficulty, and ought not to be resorted to until all other methods of solution have failed, and not even then, because the proper data for solution may be wanting.

II. Other critics assume the correctness of the account

¹ Among them are De Wette, Ustersi, Bleek, Meyer, Farrar, and Sanday.

² See Bleek's *Introduction to the N. T.*, vol. i. pp. 203, 204; Farrar's *Life of Christ*. Excursus X., Was the Last Supper an actual Passover?

given in the Synoptic Gospels, that our Lord was crucified on the 15th Nisan, or the day of the Passover.¹ They assert that the narratives of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are plain and evident, and cannot be explained away; whereas the language of John is indefinite, and may be explained by reference to the manner in which the Jews observed the Passover. They minimise the difficulties arising from the fact that the 15th Nisan was a holy day, and some assert that such was the rage of the chief priests that they would not be baffled by legal scruples as to the lawfulness of their actions. If they imbrued their hands in the blood of the Son of God, they would not scruple to break through the ordinances of the law; they would permit nothing to stand in the way of the accomplishment of their atrocious purposes; they would rather profane the Passover than give their victim a chance of escape. An opportunity of apprehending Christ had presented itself, and they, in defiance of all obstacles, grasped at the opportunity. The Pharisees must have regarded the matter as a life-and-death struggle.

In order to effect a reconciliation between this view and the statements of the Fourth Gospel, some suppose that the supper recorded in John's Gospel, at which our Lord washed His disciples' feet, is different from that recorded in the Synoptics, at which our Lord instituted the Holy Communion. This is the opinion adopted by the great Hebrew scholar John Lightfoot, and by Bengel. Lightfoot identifies it with the supper of Simon the

¹ This is the opinion of Wieseler, Olshausen, Tholuck, Guericke, Lange, Luthardt, Hengstenberg, Hofmann, Oosterzee, Ebrard, Schaff, and among English theologians of Wordsworth, Edersheim, Geikie, and McClellan.

leper, when Mary poured the precious ointment on our Saviour, and which occurred two days before the Passover. This would account for the want of all allusion to the Holy Communion in the discourse of our Lord to His disciples. If the supper was identical with that mentioned by the Synoptists, it is argued that it is difficult to account for the absence of any reference to that solemn feast, which was to supersede the Passover, and which was to be a perpetual memorial of the Lord's death. Besides, this supposition explains several references in John's Gospel, such as, that the supper occurred before the feast of the Passover, and that the disciples supposed that our Lord gave directions to Judas to purchase those things which were necessary for the feast.

But this explanation, founded on the supposition of two suppers, is completely untenable, and would not, even if the supposition were correct, solve the problem. The supper recorded in John's Gospel is the same as that recorded in the Synoptics: in both accounts Judas is pointed out as the betrayer, and Peter is forewarned of his impending defection; and at the conclusion of both, Jesus and His disciples repair to the garden of Gethsemane. Thus in John's Gospel we read, "When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Kidron, where was a garden, into which He entered, Himself and His disciples" (John xviii. 1). The omission of all reference in our Lord's discourse to the Holy Communion is accounted for by the supplementary nature of John's Gospel, which omits various events of the highest importance recorded by the other Evangelists. Nor would the supposition of two suppers

remove the difficulty. Supposing that the supper recorded by John occurred two days before the Passover, and the supper mentioned by the Synoptists was the Paschal Supper, although this accounts for two intimations in John's Gospel (John xiii. 1, 29), yet it does not account for other statements, as that at our Lord's trial before Pilate, the chief priests would not enter into the prætorium lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover, and that the day of the trial was the preparation of the Passover. The difference between the accounts of the Synoptists and John remains as it was.

Others suppose that the chief priests postponed the Passover from the 15th to the 16th Nisan. This opinion was suggested by Chrysostom as an alternative, and has been adopted by Bishop Wordsworth. So eager were the chief priests to put our Lord to death, that in order to seize the opportunity of crucifying Him which presented itself, and at the same time to avoid the desecration of the Paschal day, they deferred the Passover to a day later than that prescribed by law. Thus, according to this theory, our Lord and His disciples, in accordance with the Synoptists, partook of the Passover on the lawful day, the 15th Nisan, but the chief priests deferred its observance until the following day, the 16th Nisan. This would account for the statements given in the Gospel of John.

But there is no ground whatever for this opinion. There is not a shadow of reason for the supposition that the priests postponed the Passover; indeed, such a supposition approaches to an absurdity. The chief priests,

who were so scrupulous in their legal observances, who, although they would imbrue their hands in the blood of an innocent man, yet would not enter into the judgment-hall of Pilate lest they should be defiled, would not commit such a glaring breach of the Mosaic law as actually to change the day of the celebration of the most sacred of their feasts. Besides, even admitting the supposition, the discrepancy still remains, the problem is unsolved. John expressly tells us that Jesus and His disciples partook of their last supper before the feast of the Passover.

Others¹ suppose that John, when he speaks of the Passover, does not allude to the particular day, 15th Nisan, when the Paschal lamb was eaten, but to the whole Paschal feast, which lasted seven or eight days. These days are included in the feast of the Passover; they were "the days of unleavened bread," and on them there were special offerings, and especially the feast called in the Talmud Chagigah, which was regarded as being almost as sacred as the Passover.² When, then, it is said that the priests entered not into the judgment-hall lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover, the allusion is not to their eating the Paschal lamb, but to their eating the Chagigah.³ So also, when it is said that it was the preparation of the Passover, the allusion is to the Sabbath in the Paschal week, of which the Friday was the preparation, and which

¹ This solution has been advanced by Olshausen, Wieseler, and Tholuck.

² Deut. xvi. 16, 17. Lightfoot, *Horæ Heb.* on John xviii. 28. The Chagigah was eaten at other festivals: it was not a purely Paschal ordinance.

³ Wieseler's *Synopsis*, pp. 348 ff.

is called by the Synoptists *παρασκευὴ ὃ ἐστὶ προσάββατον* (Mark xv. 42). When, also, it is said that that Sabbath was "a great day among the Jews," the words receive their appropriate meaning by considering that it was the Paschal Sabbath, and the day on which the sheaf-offering was presented.¹

However ingenious this solution of the problem is, yet it gives a forced interpretation to the words of John, and will not stand the test of criticism. However wide a meaning may be given to the word Passover, as embracing the whole Paschal feast, yet the phrase "the preparation of the Passover" (John xix. 14), must denote the preparation day or 14th Nisan, when the Paschal lamb was sacrificed and prepared. To put any other meaning into the words is to distort the sense in order to accommodate it to our preconceived opinions. The phrase "to eat the Passover," in its obvious and natural sense, can only mean to eat the Paschal lamb, and it is putting a forced interpretation into the words to apply them to the eating of the Chagigah, which, properly speaking, constituted no part of the Paschal feast at all, as it was eaten at other festivals besides the Passover.

Such, then, are various hypotheses of reconciliation which have been adopted. Some of them are more plausible than others; but it cannot be affirmed that even the most plausible is completely satisfactory. So far as appears to us, the correct solution has not yet been discovered, the difficulty in the way of reconciliation still remains. It is our duty as Biblical critics, as seekers after truth, frankly to admit the difference—

¹ Lev. xxiii. 9-14; Jos. *Ant.* iii. 10. 5.

that, according to the Synoptists, Christ and His disciples partook of the Passover at one time, whilst, according to John, the Jewish rulers partook of it at another. "A thorough exegesis," observes Bleek, "will not suffer us to deny that we have here a real difference between the narrative of the Synoptists and that of John."¹ "That there is here a real difficulty," observes Professor Salmon, "I freely acknowledge, for there seems a force put on the words of John, if our Lord's last supper be made the Passover supper, or else a force put on the words of the Synoptic Evangelists, if it be not. It probably requires only a fuller knowledge of some of the facts connected with the usages of the time to remove the discrepancy."² "We regard," observes Pressensé, "the question up till now as insoluble, while holding John's account to be entirely correct."³

But whilst admitting the failure of all methods of reconciliation hitherto advanced, we are not thereby constrained to admit that there is any real contradiction, and that a satisfactory solution is unattainable. There are various matters connected with the mode of the celebration of the Passover in the days of our Lord on which we require more information. The regulations laid down in the Talmud have more closely to be examined, and it has to be determined whether these regulations were observed in the days of our Lord. There was then a difference in the mode of observing the Passover from that enjoined in the Mosaic law, but the nature and extent of the modifications have

¹ Bleek's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. i. p. 191.

² *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 304.

³ *Vie de Jesus*, p. 593.

not been ascertained. "The ancient authorities (the Bible, Josephus, and Philo)," observes Professor Salmon, "leave some points undetermined on which we desire information, while regulations cited from the Talmud are open to the doubt whether they are as ancient as our Lord's days. Without knowing, for example, what latitude the usages of that period permitted as to the time of holding the feast, we cannot tell whether to accept solutions which assume that the priests did not eat the Passover at the same time as our Lord's disciples."¹ But allowing the differences to remain, we must ever recollect that differences in the statements of the concomitants of facts do not necessarily destroy the evidence of the truth of the facts themselves. There are many divergencies in the accounts given us by the several Evangelists of the resurrection of Christ, and there is an acknowledged difficulty in reconciling them, but these do not at all affect the fact that Christ rose from the dead. So also here, the differences as to the precise day of the month of our Lord's death does not in the slightest degree weaken the truth of the fact that Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. Admitting the differences in the accounts on this point, the general credibility of the narrative in its main particulars is not affected thereby.

With regard to the precise day of our Lord's death, after careful examination, we have come to the conclusion that it was the 14th Nisan, the day of Preparation, in accordance with the intimations given in John's Gospel. Historical evidence, as far as it goes, is in

¹ *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 305.

favour of the 14th Nisan as the day of the crucifixion. We have the testimony of Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Hippolytus that our Lord was crucified on the 14th Nisan. But what is most singular is, that in the Jewish records, when the subject is alluded to, our Lord's death is asserted to have occurred at this time. Thus in the Babylonian Gemara we read that "Jesus was suspended on the evening of the Passover," an expression which denotes the evening when the Passover commenced, or the evening of 14th Nisan.¹

With the day of Christ's death is connected the Paschal or Easter controversy, which nearly rent asunder the Western and Oriental Churches, and anticipated by several centuries the great schism which afterwards occurred. The dispute was, whether the anniversary of our Lord's death was to be observed on a stated day of the week or on a stated day of the month. The following is the account given us by Eusebius :—"There was a considerable discussion raised about this time, in consequence of a difference of opinion respecting the observance of the Paschal season. The Churches of all Asia, guided by a remote tradition, supposed that they ought to keep the fourteenth day of the month for the festival of the Saviour's Passover, on which day the Jews were commanded to kill the Paschal lamb; and it was incumbent on them at all times to make an end of the fast on this day, on whatever day of the week it should happen to fall. But as it was not the custom to celebrate it in this manner in the Churches throughout the rest of the world, who observe the practice that has

¹ Godel's *Commentary on St. John*, vol. iii. p. 291.

prevailed from apostolic tradition until the present time, so it would not be proper to terminate our fast on any other day but the day of the resurrection of our Saviour. Hence there were synods and convocations of bishops on this question, and all unanimously drew up an ecclesiastical decree, that the mystery of our Lord's resurrection should be celebrated on no other day than the Lord's day, and that on this day alone we should observe the close of the Paschal fast."¹ According to the Orientals, the fast was terminated on the 14th Nisan, on whatever day of the week it should happen, and hence they were called Quartodecimans, and for this practice they appealed to the authority of John; whereas, according to the Westerns, the anniversary of the Lord's death was to be observed on the Friday following the 14th Nisan, and the fast before Easter terminated on the Sunday, the anniversary of His resurrection, and for this practice they appealed to the authority of Peter and Paul. With the Orientals the day or days were variable, as Christmas with us; with the Westerns they were settled, as Good Friday and Easter Sunday with us.² The first notice which we have of this famous controversy is the dispute which arose between Polycarp and Anicetus, the Bishop of Rome. Neither convinced his opponent, but each was allowed to keep his own opinion. Thus Irenæus writes, "Neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 23.

² The controversy now appears to us to be most insignificant, though in reality it is not more insignificant than many other controversies which have not only threatened to rend, but have actually rent the Christian Church.

observe it (the 14th Nisan), because he had always observed it with John and the rest of the Apostles with whom he associated.”¹ Several years after, Victor, the Bishop of Rome, endeavoured to force the Orientals into the adoption of the opinion of the Western Churches, and attempted to “cut off the Churches of all Asia, together with the neighbouring Churches, as heterodox, from the common unity.”² For this he was rebuked by Irenæus, who, although he himself adopted the Western custom, yet was opposed to the arrogance and intolerance of Victor. The controversy did not terminate until the Council of Nice (A.D. 325), when it was settled in favour of the view of the Western Churches.

This controversy has been used by the Tübingen school as an argument against the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel. They affirm that the Paschal feast was a commemoration of the Lord's Supper, the Christian Passover, and as the Orientals who adopted the 14th Nisan pled in support of those opinions the authority of John, they argue that John must have held that our Lord partook of the Supper on the evening at the close of the 14th Nisan, which is contrary to the account in his Gospel. But they entirely overlook the fact that, whilst this controversy raged, the Gospel of John was fully recognised by the whole Christian world. Besides, it is a mere assumption, and an assumption which is extremely doubtful, that the Lord's Supper was the ordinance commemorated. Others (Lücke, Gieseler, De Wette, Bleek, Charteris³) suppose that the

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, v. 24.

² *Idem.*

³ See a very learned dissertation by Dr. Charteris in his *Canonicity*,

14th Nisan was kept because it was the legal Passover of the Jews; and others (Neander, Ewald, Godet), with still greater probability, suppose that the celebration of the 14th Nisan was the commemoration of the death of Christ; and if this is the case, it is in perfect agreement with the chronology of the Fourth Gospel.¹ But until Biblical critics are agreed what fast was commemorated by the Orientals on the 14th Nisan, it is evident that the Paschal controversy has no bearing either on the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel or on the question under discussion, the day of our Lord's death.

pp. 85-96. The arguments in favour of this view of the subject are there stated with great force and ingenuity.

¹ For the different views of theologians concerning the nature of the Paschal controversy, see Luthardt, *St. John the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 154, 155.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.¹

LITERATURE.—The most important commentaries on this Epistle are those of Lücke (Bonn, 1836; translated, Edinburgh, 1837); De Wette (1837, fifth edition, edited by Brückner, Leipzig, 1863); Neander (Berlin, 1851; translated, New York, 1853); Düsterdieck (Göttingen, 1852); Huther (Göttingen, 1855; fourth edition, 1880; translated, Edinburgh, 1880); F. D. Maurice (Cambridge, 1857); Ebrard (1859; translated, Edinburgh, 1880); Braune (Lange's *Bibelwerk*, 1862; translated, New York, 1867); Haupt (Colberg, 1870; translated, Edinburgh, 1879); Rothe (posthumous, edited by Mühlhäuser, 1879); Bishop Alexander (*Speaker's Commentary*, 1881; also *Expositor's Bible*, London, 1889); Sinclair (in the *New Testament Commentary*, edited by Bishop Ellicott); Plummer (in the *Cambridge Series*, 1883); Pope (in Schaff's *Popular Commentary*, 1883; Westcott (London, 1887); Lias (London, 1889).

I.—THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE FIRST EPISTLE.

THIS Epistle, like all the other writings of John, with the exception of the Apocalypse, is anonymous; but the external evidence in favour of its Johannine origin is early, strong, unbroken, and conclusive. At the commencement of the second century, Polycarp (A.D. 116), who, as Irenæus informs us, was a disciple of John, evidently alludes to it when he says, "For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is Antichrist"² (1 John iv. 3). Papias (A.D. 120), who,

¹ This subject has already been discussed in the author's *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*. It is here treated in an abridged form. The reader is referred for a fuller discussion to the work above mentioned.

Ad Philipens., chap. vii.

according to Irenæus, was a hearer of John and an associate of Polycarp, as Eusebius informs us, "made use of testimonies from the First Epistle of John, and likewise from that of Peter."¹ And, along with these two apostolic Fathers, we have express declarations to the Johannine authorship of this Epistle made by Irenæus² (A.D. 180), the Muratorian canon³ (A.D. 180), Clemens Alexandrinus⁴ (A.D. 190), and Tertullian⁵ (A.D. 200), in the second century; and by Origen⁶ (A.D. 230) and Cyprian⁷ (A.D. 250) in the third. Eusebius mentions this Epistle among the universally acknowledged writings (ὁμολογουμένα),⁸ and states that "besides the Gospel of John, his First Epistle is acknowledged without dispute, both by those of the present day and also by the ancients."⁹ This general testimony of the Fathers has been called in question only by a few heretical sects: by the Alogi, because there is in it a reference to the doctrine of the Logos, which they reject; and by the Marcionites, an extreme anti-Jewish Gnostic sect, who from polemical reasons rejected all the books of Scripture, with the exception of the Gospel of Luke and several of Paul's Epistles.¹⁰

Nor is the internal evidence less strong than the external. The author represents himself as an eye-

¹ *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39.

² *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 16, 5; iii. 16, 8.

³ "Quod ergo mirum, si Joannes tam constanter singula etiam in epistolis suis proferat, dicens in semetipso, Quæ videmus," &c.

⁴ *Strom.*, ii. 15; *Pædog.*, iii. 11.

⁵ *Adv. Prax.*, chap. xv.; *Adv. Marcion.*, v. 16; *Scorp.*, chap. xii.

⁶ *De Orat.*, Opp., tom. i. p. 233.

⁷ *Epist.* 24 (al. 28).

⁸ *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 25.

⁹ *Idem*, iii. 24.

¹⁰ For a fuller statement of the external testimonies in favour of the First Epistle of John see *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, pp. 256-259.

witness of the incidents of the life of Christ in words similar to those used by the writer of the Fourth Gospel : "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you ;" "We have beheld and bear witness that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (John i. 3, iv. 14) ; thus suggesting that the two works proceeded from the same author. The Epistle also bears upon it the impress of John's character, as that is elsewhere manifested in the other writings of the New Testament, and in the legends or reminiscences of the Church. "Love was the distinguishing feature of the beloved Apostle, and love is the chief theme of this Epistle. That moral indignation, which was displayed when he wished to draw down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans, is also seen in his invectives against those heretics who called in question our Lord's advent in the flesh. That contemplative disposition, which is seen in the record of our Lord's farewell address and in the insight into our Lord's disposition, is also conspicuous in the Epistle. That calmness and composure of mind, which distinguished John from the ardent Peter, and which distinction on several occasions was manifest in the actions of these Apostles when together, are noticeable as characteristics of this Epistle."¹ "Let it be noted," observes Haupt, "how admirably the character of our Epistle accords with what we otherwise know of the character of the Apostle. On the one side there is a keenness of severity in the severance of light from darkness, and of the world from the kingdom of God, which betrays the Son of Thunder.

¹ *Introduction to Catholic Epistles*, p. 262.

But, on the other side, and concurrently with this, we feel a breath of most pathetic and most inward affection, from a spirit overflowing with love and strong in peaceful rest, such as corresponds precisely with those narratives, handed down from antiquity, concerning his old age, which appeal so forcibly to our hearts.”¹

So also when we carefully read the Fourth Gospel and the Epistle and compare them together, we feel constrained to come to the conclusion that both proceed from the same author. There is not only a similarity, but an identity of style. The same ideas are employed, and often the same words. The two leading ideas of the Gospel—Life and Light—that “in Him was Life, and the Life is the Light of men,” also pervade the Epistle. Such leading expressions as “being born of God,” “abiding in God,” “walking in the truth,” “walking in darkness,” “overcoming the world,” are found in both writings. Long lists of parallels are given by various commentators which go to demonstrate an identity of authorship.²

But yet this resemblance is not the resemblance of imitation, so that the Epistle might be considered as a mere imitation of the Gospel written by some other person, but arises from the same person writing different books and discussing different subjects. Along with points of resemblance there are also points of

¹ Haupt, *The First Epistle of St. John*, p. 366, English translation.

² See Eichhorn's *Einleitung in das N. T.*, vol. ii. pp. 281-283; De Wette's *Einleitung*, p. 396 f.; Guericke's *Neutestamentliche Isagogik*, p. 474; Bishop Alexander, *Speaker's Commentary*, vol. iv. p. 282; Westcott's *Epistles of St. John*, pp. 41-43; Plummer *On First John*, Cambridge series, pp. 37-40; Davidson's *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, 2nd edit., pp. 233-235.

difference. The occasions and objects of these writings were different. The Gospel is a historical account of the life of Jesus Christ, whilst the Epistle is a practical exhortation to believers to imbibe the spirit of Christ. The polemical element is much greater in the Epistle than in the Gospel. There is direct mention of heretics, and their heresies are stated and condemned. In the Gospel the Paraclete is the Holy Ghost (John xiv. 16), whilst in the Epistle the Paraclete is Jesus Christ Himself (1 John ii. 1). In the Epistle the death of Christ is said to be a propitiation (*ἱλασμός*) for our sins; and likewise for the sins of the whole world (1 John ii. 2); whereas in the Gospel it is only asserted that Christ gave up His life for us, but without any definite mention of the propitiatory nature of His death. These differences result from the difference in the designs of the two works; the Gospel was written to prove that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God; the Epistle on the assumption of this truth, and to exhort believers to walk in the light, and to cultivate fellowship with the Father and the Son. "The First Epistle," observes Westcott, "presupposes the Gospel, either as a writing, or as oral instruction. But while there are numerous and striking resemblances both in form and thought between the Epistle and the Evangelist's record of the Lord's discourses and his own narrative, there are still characteristic differences between them. In the Epistle the doctrine of the Lord's true and perfect humanity (*σάρξ*) is predominant; in the Gospel that of His divine glory (*δόξα*). The burden of the Epistle is 'the Christ is Jesus;' the writer presses his argument

from the divine to the human, from the spiritual and ideal to the historical. The burden of the Gospel is 'Jesus is the Christ;' the writer presses his argument from the human to the divine, from the historical to the spiritual and ideal."¹

II.—THE READERS OF THE EPISTLE.

Some² suppose that this Epistle of John is in reality not an Epistle at all, but an ethical treatise on the Christian life, or an epitome of Christian doctrine, or a pastoral. It has none of the characteristics of an epistle; there is no address to the readers at the commencement, and no salutation from the author at the close; nor are there in it any personal references. But although it has not the form of an epistle, yet it abounds with epistolary addresses; and although there are no references to individuals or to Churches, yet there are references to certain forms of heresy, into which those addressed were liable to fall. It has been uniformly regarded by the Fathers as an Epistle. The title catholic or circular given it in our catalogue of the sacred books appropriately designates it.³

So also it has been supposed that the Epistle bears a peculiar relation to the Fourth Gospel, and was written with a distinct reference to it.⁴ Some think that it was a preface or introduction to the Gospel;

¹ *Introduction to the Gospel of St. John* in *Speaker's Bible*, vol. ii. p. 88.

² Bengel, Michaelis, Bishop Horsley, Reuss, Bishop Westcott.

³ Its epistolary character is maintained by Lücke, Bleek, Huther, Weiss, and Düsterdieck.

⁴ This is the opinion adopted by Storr, Hug, Ebrard, Haupt, Hofmann, Thiersch, Bishop Alexander, Bishop Lightfoot, Plummer, and Westcott.

others, that it was a supplement or postscript; others, that it was a comment or dissertation; others, that it was a companion-document; and others, that it was an encyclical letter accompanying the Gospel. But all these opinions are mere hypotheses, for which there is no adequate reason. Although the Gospel and Epistle were written by the same author, yet there is no reason to suppose that the one was written with a direct reference to the other. They are separate writings, written with different designs, and independently of each other, and called forth by different occasions, each writing being complete in itself.¹

Some Latin authors suppose that this Epistle was addressed to the Parthians. This opinion has its origin in a statement of Augustine, who quotes from this Epistle as "the Epistle of John to the Parthians."² In this he has been followed by Vigilius Tapsensis, Cassiodorus,³ Bede, and in modern times by Grotius, Schulthess, and partially by Michaelis. It is evidently erroneous, as it is not adverted to by any of the ancient Fathers, nor is there any mention of a mission of John to the Parthians. Various reasons have been assigned for this mistake. Some suppose that John being styled *ὁ παρθένος*, the mistake arose from confounding the word *παρθένος* with *παρθός*; others, that the error originated from the Second Epistle being styled in some manuscripts *πρὸς παρθένοvs*, which was confounded with *πρὸς πάρθους*; and others, that the Epistle being catholic, had the title *πρὸς τοὺς*

¹ This opinion of the independence of the two writings is held by Bleek, Lücke, Ewald, Huther, and Alford.

² *Quæst. Evang.*, ii. 39.

³ Cassiodorus, *De institut. divin. script.*, c. 14, *Opera*, p. 459.

διασπαρσάμενους, rendered in Latin *ad sparsos*, which being not understood, was changed into *ad Parthos*. Equally groundless are the suppositions that the Epistle was originally addressed to the Jewish Christians in Judæa,¹ and to the Church of Corinth.²

Setting aside these opinions as erroneous, we consider that the Epistle was not addressed to one particular Church, but that it is a catholic or encyclical Epistle. It was primarily addressed to the Churches of Proconsular Asia. With these Churches John was in intimate relationship; to them he addressed the Apocalypse; for many years he resided at Ephesus, the centre of the district, and, as we learn from Eusebius, he was accustomed to make to them pastoral visitations. He is evidently acquainted with their wants and temptations, and he writes to them, not as to strangers, but with all the love of a spiritual father.

Christianity had at an early period, chiefly by the missionary labours of Paul, been planted in the principal cities of Proconsular Asia. There were flourishing Christian congregations in Ephesus, Colosse, Laodicea, and Smyrna. These Churches were chiefly composed of Gentile converts. There were indeed numerous Jews resident in Proconsular Asia, but it does not appear that they in any numbers had embraced the Gospel. It would also appear that these Churches were in a state of comparative peace; they had been allowed to develop themselves without any interference from the Roman Government; the Neronian persecution had not extended

¹ The opinion of Benson and Macknight.

² The opinion of Dr. John Lightfoot.

to Asia, and that of Domitian was in all probability past. The dangers which threatened the Churches of Asia arose not from without, but from within; heresies had sprung up within them. Proconsular Asia, and especially its capital, Ephesus, was the chief seat of heresy on account of the contact of Christianity with Greek and Oriental philosophy. Paul, in his farewell address to the elders of Ephesus, forewarned them of this danger (Acts xx. 30). In his First Epistle to Timothy, who was at that time resident in Ephesus, he speaks of the opposition of science falsely so called (1 Tim. vi. 20). And in the Epistles to the seven Asiatic Churches there are various intimations of the prevalence of heretical opinions among them; mention is in them made of the Nicolaitanes, an impure Gnostic sect, of that woman Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess, and who seduced believers to eat things sacrificed to idols; and of those who held the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication (Rev. ii. 6, 14, 20).

III.—THE DESIGN OF THE EPISTLE.

The general design or intention of the Epistle is thus stated: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full." "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son

of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John i. 3, 4; v. 13). The Epistle was written not so much for the purpose of conviction as with a view to edification. The Gospel was designed to prove that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God; but the Epistle was written to those who already believed on the name of the Son of God; it was addressed to believers; its object was not to convert, but to edify and exhort. John proceeded on the ground that his readers were firmly convinced of the divine nature of Christ, that the Logos was made flesh, and he aims at the promotion of fellowship with the Father and the Son; he seeks to persuade Christians that they have eternal life, and that they should walk in the light as Christ is in the light.

But although such is the general design of the Epistle, yet a polemical element evidently pervades it. The Apostle writes to warn Christians against certain erroneous views of the person of Christ which were doubtless circulated among the Asiatic Churches. He cautions them against being led astray by certain prevalent opinions, and exhorts them to test these opinions by their nature and tendency. "Believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (John iv. 1). Hence the Fathers uniformly recognise the polemical character of this Epistle, and particularise the heresies against which it was written.¹

¹ Thus Tertullian observes, "In this Epistle John specially designates those as antichrists who denied that Christ was come in the flesh, and who refused to think that Jesus was the Son of God. The one dogma Marcion maintains; the other Ebion."—*De Præscript. Hær.*, chap. xxxiii.

The general form of heresy against which John wrote was Gnosticism. Gnosticism arose early in the Apostolic age, but was not fully developed until the second century, when it took shape and form, and greatly disturbed the peace of the Christian Church and endangered its purity and unity. It was an eclectic system, and necessarily arose from the contact of Christianity with heathen philosophy. When the educated and philosophising heathen passed over to Christianity, they carried their philosophy with them, and mingled its tenets with the doctrines of the Gospel. There are four peculiarities which in some form or other are common to all Gnosticism. (*a.*) The Gnostics set a high value upon the Gnosis or knowledge; they exalted this at the expense of Christian morality, and hence they divided Christians into two classes or castes—the enlightened, who have attained to the knowledge of the truth, and the unenlightened, who are not initiated into the mysteries of the Gospel; faith suffices for the latter, whilst knowledge is the exclusive possession of the former. (*b.*) The Gnostics regarded all matter as inherently corrupt, as the principle of evil; they were distinctly Dualists. Between God and matter there was a void which was filled up with a number of spiritual beings or powers, called æons. These æons were considered as emanations from God, and the farther they were removed from God, the greater was their imperfection. (*c.*) As matter was evil, the Gnostics could not conceive God to be the Creator of the material world. They thought that some inferior being, to whom the majority of them gave the name of Demiurgus, was the

creator. According to some, the Demiurgus was an inferior but benevolent being; according to others, he was an evil power. Most of them regarded him as the God of the Old Testament. (*d.*) For a like reason the Gnostics could not conceive that Christ had a material body. Hence they denied that Christ came in the flesh, and maintained that His person was an appearance, and not a reality. What is called Docetism, or the mere appearance of a material form without any substance, was not a particular heresy of certain Gnostics, but an essential principle which pervaded all Gnosticism. In general Christ was regarded by the Gnostics not in an exclusive sense as the Son of God, the incarnate Logos, but as the highest æon or emanation from God. When in the world, He possessed an apparent, but not a real body.¹

Gnosticism was not fully developed into a system or systems until the second century by Basilides, Valentinus, Marcion, and others; but its germs existed in the Apostolic age. There was a mingling of Christianity with heathen philosophy. Especially was this the case in Proconsular Asia, which may be considered as the cradle of Gnosticism, on account of the speculative tendency of the Asiatic-Greek mind. Thus in the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul warns his converts against certain errors of a Gnostic character: "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. ii. 8). He cautions them

¹ See Dissertation on Gnosticism in my *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, pp. 305-321.

against the worshipping of angels and the intrusion into things not seen. He discountenances the pretensions to a superior knowledge, and speaks of those who had only a show of wisdom, vainly puffed up by their fleshly mind. And he emphasises Christ as the Creator of the world, as if in contrast with the Gnostic notion of the Demiurgus, and asserts that in Him dwelleth all the pleroma of the Godhead bodily (Col. ii. 18; i. 16; ii. 9). In the First Epistle to Timothy, sent to Ephesus, the Apostle, with evident reference to Gnostic errors, speaks of the antithesis of knowledge falsely so called, and of the endless genealogies in which men indulged (1 Tim. vi. 20; i. 4), which may well be understood as a reference to the successive descents of the Gnostic æons. But Gnosticism had been considerably developed during the interval between the period when Paul wrote his Epistles and when John wrote his. It was more widely spread, more clearly defined, more systematised. The docetic nature of Christ, which is only dimly indicated in Paul's Epistles, was now distinctly taught, and the great doctrine of the incarnation was either denied or explained away.

The particular form of Gnosticism, against which John protests in his Epistles, is Docetism—the denial that Christ came in the flesh (1 John iv. 2, 3; 2 John 7). According to this view, Christ was a mere appearance, like the angels who appeared in Old Testament times. Some distinguished between Jesus and Christ. Jesus, they admitted, was a man possessed of a real humanity, upon whom Christ, the heavenly æon, descended at His baptism, but left Him before His suffer-

ings commenced.¹ Similar warnings against Docetism were given by the Apostolic Fathers, proving how early this form of Gnosticism pervaded the Christian Church. Thus Ignatius in his Epistle to the Trallians writes : “ Be ye deaf, therefore, when any man speaketh to you apart from Jesus Christ, who was of the race of David, who was the son of Mary, who was truly born and ate and drank, was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died in the sight of those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth.”² And in his Epistle to the Smyrnians he writes : “ He suffered all these things for our sakes : and He suffered truly, as also He raised Himself truly ; not as certain unbelievers say, that He suffered in semblance.”³ So also Polycarp writes with evident allusion to the words of John : “ Whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is Antichrist.”⁴

Nor is Gnosticism by any means extinct. The warnings of the Apostle against it are still applicable in our days. We may wonder at the fancies, and follies, and absurdities of Gnostic speculations—the genealogies of æons ; but although the form is altered, yet the spirit of Gnosticism is still abroad in the Christian Church. We certainly are in little danger of vilifying and depreciating matter, as if it were intrinsically evil ; our error lies in the contrary direction of deifying it. But although Gnostic cosmogony may be abandoned, yet the Christology of many is decidedly Gnostic. Many

¹ This was the doctrine of the heresiarch Cerinthus, a contemporary of John. Irenæus, *Adv. Her.*, i. 26, 1.

² *Ep. ad Trall.*, chap. ix., Bishop Lightfoot's translation.

³ *Ep. ad Smyr.*, chap. ii.

⁴ *Ep. ad Philippens.*, chap. vii.

adopt the Ebionite view of denying the incarnation and divinity of Christ, and regarding Him as a mere man. The tendency now is to dwell wholly on the human character of Christ, and to overlook His divine nature. Many also adopt the views of Cerinthus, and separate the Christ from Jesus; they deny that Jesus wrought any miracles, and, like Cerinthus, esteem Him merely as more righteous, prudent, and wise than other men. Many give a docetic interpretation to His resurrection, and hold that the manifestations to His disciples were merely visionary appearances, and not realities. The old forms of heresy are reappearing in new shapes, and are again corrupting the purity of the faith.

But the polemical element forms only a small portion of this Epistle. John did not write merely to confute gainsayers or to attack the heresies which were then prevalent. He aimed at practical godliness. He wished to establish believers in the truth and in the practice of the truth. All his exhortations are with a view to this. He has an intense hatred of sin and an intense love of holiness. What he has chiefly in view is the promotion of fellowship with the Father and the Son, and, by means of this, fellowship among believers. He especially exhorts believers to entire severance from the world. The world is the kingdom of Satan; it is the enemy of God; it lieth in wickedness. Herein consists the great contrast between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. All that is in the world—its lusts, its allurements, its rewards—are not of the Father. And certainly, at the period when John wrote his Epistle, the world was in a state of extreme moral degradation, and

no warnings against it could be sufficiently emphatic, and no denunciations of it sufficiently strong.

IV.—TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

The supposition of Grotius, Whitby, and Michaelis, that this Epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, is entirely baseless. The Epistle bears internal evidence that it was written toward the close of the Apostle's residence in Ephesus. The Church was in a state of external peace; the Roman government had ceased to be hostile. Flourishing Churches had also been for some time established in all the principal cities of Proconsular Asia, as is evident from their development, and from the variety of opinions which then prevailed among them. The Jewish controversy, which had early disturbed the peace of the Church, and against which Paul in almost all his Epistles had contended, had ceased. A new phase of controversy concerning the Person of Christ had arisen—a controversy which necessarily implies an education in Christian doctrine. And it is also evident that the Epistle bears internal marks that it was written by an aged man; it is the outpouring of the love of an aged saint toward his beloved children: "I write unto you, little children." The first generation of Christians were passing away, and a new generation had arisen. It is still a matter of dispute, whether the Gospel or the Epistle was written first. Lücke, Ewald, Ebrard, and Haupt maintain the priority of the Gospel, whilst Bleek, Brückner, Huther, and Weiss assert that the Epistle was first

written. In all probability there was no great difference of time between them; and as John survived to the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98), both were probably written toward the close of the ~~second~~ ^{first} century.¹

There is no reason to call in question the general opinion that the place of composition was Ephesus. Here John resided for more than thirty years, and from this as a centre he exercised an apostolic superintendence over the Churches of Proconsular Asia. Ephesus might at that period be regarded as the chief seat of Christianity; it was the capital of a large and flourishing province, the great emporium of the merchandise of the East, the place of resort of all nations, and the centre of philosophic thought. The other supposition, favoured by Hug, Ebrard, and Haupt, that the Epistle was written from Patmos, rests on no foundation.

V.—STYLE AND CHARACTER OF THE EPISTLE.

The style of the Epistle has already been considered in the general remarks on the style of John's writings. Attention was then directed to the simplicity of language, the smallness of the vocabulary, and the sparing use of connecting particles. Especially in this Epistle is the peculiar kind of repetition in the form of antithetic propositions conspicuous, the proposition being expressed first negatively, and then positively; as, for example, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all;" "He that doeth good is of God: he that doeth evil hath not seen God."

¹ Ebrard fixes on A.D. 94.

All this is analogous to the poetry of the Hebrews. The language is Greek, but the form of expression is Hebrew. There is a picturesqueness of style, a Hebrew rhythm, like that of the Old Testament prophets, which shows that the author, although writing in comparatively pure Greek, was a Hebrew poet and a profound student of the Old Testament. But, along with this simplicity of language, there is a profundity of thought. Few of the writings of the New Testament require more patient study to discover the full import of the thoughts which the words convey, or to fathom the doctrines which are there asserted in apparently simple aphoristic terms.¹

There is an idealism about this Epistle. It not only exhibits a high degree of Christian perfection, but one which is apparently unattainable. "He that is born of God sinneth not, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This is the ideal state—the condition to which Christianity seeks to bring man. Love is the great principle which pervades this Epistle; it is its keynote—love to man arising from love to God. But this love is with John not a mere sentimental benevolence; it is ever combined with hatred to sin. Love shows itself in the hatred of evil; the light excludes the darkness; and hence combined with intense love there is a tone of severity in the Epistle. "As it had become," says Ewald, "a growing custom to write in epistles to the Church at large on important general questions, in his special circumstances John found it still more appropriate, in lofty repose, almost as a glorified patriarch,

¹ *Introduction to Catholic Epistles*, pp. 285, 286.

already raised far above the errors of the world, to address himself to Christians generally as his children, and to leave them in this Epistle a final testimony of his love. In this way arose an Epistle which pours forth, as in serenest certainty, a rich stream of the highest Christian truths, and in the midst of its course strikes with keenest words the false teachers who had in the first instance occasioned it, but without even mentioning them by name, or specially describing them.”¹

The plan of this Epistle has been variously represented.² Bengel arranges the Epistle with reference to the Trinity, and assumes 1 John v. 7 as the key to its understanding. According to him, it treats of fellowship with the Father (chap. i.), with the Son (chaps. ii., iii.), with the Holy Ghost (chap. iv.), and concludes with a comprehensive statement of the testimony of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (chap. v.).³ Diisterdieck supposes that the theme of the Epistle is fellowship with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Farrar arranges the Epistle into three sections, corresponding with the three propositions, “God is light” (chaps. i., ii.), “God is righteous” (chaps. iii.–iv. 6), and “God is love” (chaps. iv. 7–v.);⁴ and Plummer into two, corresponding with the propositions “God is light” (chaps. i.–ii. 28), and “God is love” (chaps. ii. 29–v. 12), to which is annexed a conclusion (chap. v. 13–21).⁵

¹ Ewald's *History of Israel*, vol. viii. p. 168, English translation.

² Calvin, Reuss, and Holtzmann are unable to discover any plan.

³ Bengel's *Gnomon*, comment on 1 John v. 7.

⁴ Farrar's *Messages of the Books*, p. 486.

⁵ Plummer's *Epistles of St. John*, pp. 44, 45.

Macdonald supposes the keynote of the Epistle to be fellowship, and adopts the following arrangement:¹—

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Fellowship, its nature | chap. i.-iii. 1, 2. |
| 2. Fellowship, its fruit, <i>Holiness</i> | „ iii. 3-24. |
| 3. Fellowship, its law, <i>Truth</i> | „ iv. 1-6. |
| 4. Fellowship, its life, <i>Love</i> | „ iv. 7-20. |
| 5. Fellowship, its root, <i>Faith</i> | „ v. 1-21. |

VI.—THE INTEGRITY OF THE EPISTLE.

There are only two disputed passages, on which it is necessary to remark.

The first is 1 John ii. 23, where the last clause, “He that confesseth the Son hath the Father also” (ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει), is in the Authorised Version italicised, as if it were of doubtful genuineness. It is omitted in the *textus receptus*. Its genuineness has now, however, been fully established; and it is accordingly printed in Roman characters in the Revised Version, without any marginal note. It is found in the Sinaitic, Vatican, Alexandrian, and the principal uncial manuscripts, and is retained by Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott and Hort.

The other passage is 1 John v. 7, 8, the well-known passage of the heavenly witnesses. The disputed words are ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ὁ Πατὴρ ὁ Λόγος καὶ τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα. καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι. καὶ τρεῖς εἰσι οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῇ: “In heaven the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth.” These words, inserted without comment in the Authorised Version, are

¹ Macdonald's *Life and Writings of St. John*, p. 381.

expunged from the Revised Version. They are now universally rejected as spurious; no critic of any note now maintains their genuineness. They are omitted in all the uncial manuscripts, and in all the cursives, except three or at the most five, and these of no authority; they are found in none of the ancient versions, except in the Old Latin, where there are possible traces of them, and in the more recent manuscripts of the Vulgate. They are omitted by all the Greek Fathers before the sixth century, and by all the Latin Fathers previous to the close of the fifth century, with the possible exceptions of Tertullian and Cyprian. It was with reluctance that Erasmus inserted them into his Greek Testament, and from his edition they were inserted in the *textus receptus*. The most recent editions of the Greek Testament entirely exclude them.¹

¹ See Dissertation on the Heavenly Witnesses in the *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, pp. 289-305.

DISSERTATION.

THE THEOLOGY OF JOHN.

LITERATURE.—The writings on the Biblical Theology of John are numerous. The most important works are Lechler's *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, pp. 195-228, English translation, vol. ii. pp. 163-253; Frommann's *Der johannische Lehrbegriff*; Neander's *Planting of Christianity*, vol. ii. pp. 28-56; Schmid's *Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 519-542; Köstlin's *Der Lehrbegriff des Evangeliums und die Briefe Johannis*; Schwegler's *Das nachapostolische Zeitalter*; Hilgenfeld's *Das Evangelium und die Briefe Johannis nach ihren Lehrbegriff dargestellt*; Baur's *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche*, erste Band, pp. 146-174, and his *Neutestamentliche Theologie*; Reuss's *History of Christian Theology*, pp. 356-527; Scholten's *Das Evangelium nach Johannes*, translated into German from the Dutch; Weiss' *Der johannische Begriff*, and his *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, vol. ii. pp. 311-416; Reynolds' Introduction to John's Gospel, in the *Pulpit Commentary*, pp. 138-150; Thoma's *Die Genesis des Johannes-Evangeliums*, pp. 171-302; Westcott, *The Epistles of St. John*.

THE only sources, from which we learn the doctrinal views of John, are his writings. No discourses of his are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, nor have his sayings transmitted by tradition sufficient attestation to be relied on. These writings are separated into two distinct classes, marked by well-defined peculiarities; the one class contains the Fourth Gospel and the three Epistles ascribed to John, and the other class the Apocalypse. We have already discussed the Gospel and

the First Epistle, whilst the Apocalypse still remains as a subject for consideration. Besides, the Apocalypse is so entirely different both in matter and form¹ from the other writings of John, professing to be a revelation of the future, that it seems better to consider the theology of these two classes of writings separately. It is from the Gospel and Epistles that we derive our notion of Johannine theology in general, whilst the Apocalypse, from its nature, treats specially of the different points of eschatology. In this dissertation, therefore, we restrict ourselves to the doctrinal views of John as contained in the Gospel and Epistles.

But here we are met with a difficulty at the outset. To what extent are we permitted to use the Fourth Gospel as expressive of the views of John? It has been affirmed that, in deriving John's views from the Fourth Gospel, we are precluded from using for this purpose the discourses of Jesus. It has been said that if we consider these discourses as containing the views of John, we sacrifice their historical character, and regard them as the free composition of the Apostle. If this objection is valid, we are certainly restricted in the use of the Gospel to very narrow limits. "The direct sources of the Johannine system of teaching," observes Schmid, "which can be derived from the Gospel are, in the first place, the prologue (John i. 1-18) and the short conclusion (John xx. 30 f.). Next, we have certain statements which the Apostle adds on his own account, especially the interpretation of some of the

¹ The difference in matter is that the Apocalypse deals mainly with eschatology, and in form that it sets forth doctrine in figurative and symbolical language.

utterances of Jesus, as in chaps. ii. and vii., xi. 51 f., xii. 33; added to these, we may compare the passage with which he concludes the account of the public ministry of Jesus (John xii. 37 f.). Other passages may be adduced, but doubtfully; that in chap. ii. 24 f. must in any case be added.”¹ Now, it must be confessed that there is considerable plausibility in this objection; but we must consider the peculiar impressions which the discourses of Jesus made on such a susceptible mind as that of John. John was the beloved disciple of Jesus; he shared His inmost thoughts; his mind was saturated with His opinions; and hence those discourses of Jesus, made in private to His disciples, contain the views which doubtless were adopted by the Apostle. We are entitled to speak of the theology as Johannine, because the doctrines of Jesus were selected and organised by John in correspondence with his own subjective opinions; and this, as we have already observed, is the reason why there is little difference in spirit, and even in diction, between the writings of John and the discourses of our Lord as recorded in the Fourth Gospel. Besides, John’s own views were founded on those discourses; from them he derived much of his inspiration; they formed the staple matter of his opinions. It is impossible, therefore, to treat of Johannine doctrine satisfactorily except in connection with those discourses of Jesus, which it presupposes, and with which it is so closely bound up. His First Epistle may be considered as a comment on the Gospel, as the views expressed by

¹ Schmid’s *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, p. 521. . .

Jesus in the Gospel are contained in it.¹ Accordingly, we feel ourselves warranted in deriving the Apostle's doctrine from the discourses of Jesus recorded by him.²

The main peculiarity of the Johannine theology is its subjectivity or experimental character. This distinguishes it from the doctrinal views of the other Apostles, Paul, Peter, and James. It is addressed to our feelings rather than to our intellect: the appeal is to the conscience and emotions; it is the theology of the heart. The manifestation of Christianity in the outward conduct arises from an internal principle of life; the objective loses itself in the subjective. Hence there is a peculiar mysticism connected with John's theology. Undoubtedly the Johannine system is mystical, and John is the father of all Christian mystics. "John," observes Neander, "is the representative of the truth which lies at the basis of that tendency of the Christian spirit which sets itself in opposition to a one-sided intellectualism and ecclesiastical formality, and is distinguished by the name of mysticism."³ "The religious idea," observes Reuss, "by which the theology of John is mainly characterised, does not attract us by the same eloquent presentation of it (as does the theology of Paul); it hides itself, as it were, in an inner sanctuary; it must be sought in order to be found; it communicates itself

¹ The chief exception to this is the doctrine of the agency of the Holy Spirit, which is so fully stated in our Lord's last discourses, but not much dwelt upon in the Epistle of John.

² See on this point Lechler's *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times*, vol. ii. pp. 163-177; and Weiss' *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, vol. ii. pp. 311-315.

³ Neander's *Planting*, vol. ii. p. 48.

only to sympathetic souls; it is less attractive to the speculative mind, eager for new discoveries, and rejoicing to see its horizon widening, than to the heart which, full of holy desire and gratefully accepting what it thus receives, is satisfied even in its restricted sphere.”¹ By mysticism in religion we mean the inner life, or that religion which is founded on the feelings rather than on the reason, which is intuitive rather than logical, (idealistic) rather than (realistic,) the product of contemplation rather than of speculation, and can thus be understood only by a sympathetic mind; it relates to the soul’s union with God; it refers to God’s relation to us rather than to our relation to God. And yet this mysticism of John must not be perverted, as if there were anything fanciful or morbid about it; much indeed there is that is incomprehensible, obscure, and perplexing. It arises from John’s endeavour to rise to the highest conception of Christianity. Like the eagle, which is his emblem, he gazes on the sun; and his eye is dazzled with the glories he beholds. Nor is it a mere contemplative mysticism; it is a mysticism transfigured by love; combined with contemplation there is intense love of man and intense hatred of sin.

The relation of the doctrinal views of John to the Jewish law has been much discussed by theologians, especially by those belonging to the Tübingen school.²

¹ Reuss’ *History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age*, vol. ii. pp. 334, 335.

² See Baur’s *Geschichte der christlichen Kirche*, vol. i. p. 156 f., English translation, vol. i. pp. 155, 179, 180; also his *Neutestamentliche Theologie*.

In his writings allusions to the Jewish law are rare. Almost all the other writings of the New Testament are pervaded with questions concerning the relation of Christianity to Judaism. In John's writings there is no mention of those disputes which were occasioned by the Judaising Christians, and which disturbed the peace of the Pauline Churches. When John wrote, the great controversy concerning the Law and the Gospel had ceased; there was no longer any question how far the Gentile converts should accommodate themselves to Jewish observances; all particular ceremonies had been abolished, and Jew and Gentile were united in Christ. The divine origin of the Jewish religion was fully recognised. Moses and the prophets were quoted as authorities (John i. 17; iii. 14; v. 45; vii. 19). The Jews were the peculiar people of God; Christ came to His own (John i. 11); the Temple was His Father's house (John ii. 16); the special feasts at Jerusalem were honoured by His presence; and to the Samaritan woman our Lord said that salvation was of the Jews (John iv. 22). But whilst it was maintained that Judaism was a divine revelation, yet its restrictedness was done away with, and in every place the true worshippers were to worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John iv. 21). Jesus was to die not for the nation of the Jews only, but was to gather into one the children of God that were scattered abroad (John xi. 52). His death was a propitiation for the sins not of the Jews only, but likewise for the sins of the whole world (1 John ii. 2). And hence those theologians who make a distinction between a Jewish and a Gentile form of Christianity

maintain that both are reconciled, or rather absorbed, in the universality of John's Gospel.¹

It is extremely difficult to determine what are the central or leading ideas of John's theology. There is a certain mysticism which renders it difficult of comprehension; there is a profundity about it which can hardly be fathomed. One is inclined to think that the new life, as begun in regeneration and developed in the subsequent conduct of the Christian, the eternal life commenced on earth and perfected in heaven, is the groundwork of the Johannine system; and there is no doubt that, to a certain extent, this is true,—the religion inculcated by John is that of the inner life. The sentiment of love, which pervades the writings of this Apostle, and constitutes him "the Apostle of Love," as seen in the revelation of the Fatherhood of God, and in the enforcement of love to the brethren as the essence of the Christian life, is regarded by some as the keynote of the Johannine theology. The assertion of fellowship with the Father and the Son, and the mystical idea of union between the Father and the Son and between believers and Christ, also seems to be a leading idea, and pervades both the Gospel and the Epistle. But what appears to be the most essential principle of the Johannine theology is the prominent, unflinching, and unhesitating assertion of the divinity of Christ. The incarnation of the Divine Logos is the keynote of John's theology; all his other doctrines are connected with this idea or are derived from it.²

¹ See on the relation of Johannine theology to Judaism, Weiss' *Der Johann. Lehrbegriff*, pp. 101-129, "Die alttestamentlichen Grundlagen des johanneischen Lehrbegriffs."

² In perfect accordance with this, John thus defines the view of his

The Gospel commences with a declaration of the divinity and incarnation of the Logos. That Word which was in the beginning with God, and was God, was made flesh and dwelt among us (John i. 1-14). And the Epistle commences with a similar declaration, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life, declare we unto you" (1 John i. 1-3). This, then, is the point from which John starts, and the development of which pervades his whole Gospel. Nor can there possibly be a truth of greater magnitude; that the Eternal God should take upon Himself human nature and appear in the Person of Jesus Christ, is a declaration of stupendous importance, and must fill our minds with amazement and awe. There can hardly be any doubt that John believed in and taught the divinity of Jesus Christ, that He was the Son of God in a peculiar, ineffable manner, the partaker of the divine nature, the sharer in the divine attributes. The pre-existence of Christ is repeatedly asserted. Our Lord Himself declares that He existed before Abraham, and that He shared in the glory of the Father before the world began (John viii. 58; xvii. 5). He is declared to be the Sent of God, and to have come down from heaven to earth (John iii. 17; vi. 38). He and the Father are one, and the works which the Father doeth, the same doeth the Son (John x. 30; v. 19). But the humanity of Christ is no less positively insisted on. The Logos

Gospel: "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God" (xx. 31).

became flesh ; not merely a partaker of man's physical nature, but of the whole human nature, possessed of a human soul as well as a human body. In none of the Gospels is Christ's humanity more clearly taught. We are informed that He was a prey to human weakness ; He was weary with His journey (John iv. 6) ; He was thirsty (John xix. 28) ; He wept at the tomb of Lazarus (John xi. 35) ; He was grieved with the perverseness of His disciples, and sympathised with them in all their sorrows (John vi. 66-70 ; xiv. 1) ; He grieved in spirit, and was troubled at the thought of the sufferings which awaited Him (John xii. 27) ; and He was concerned about His mother when hanging on the cross (John xix. 26, 27). Thus the Christ of John is equally removed from Ebionism on the one hand and from Docetism on the other. There was in Him the union of the two natures, the human and the divine ; and this constituted the merit of the confession of Peter : " Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life ; and we believe and know that Thou art the Holy One of God " (John vi. 68).

From the incarnation of the Logos necessarily arises the revelation of God. Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh. God Himself is incomprehensible to His creatures. He dwelleth in the light which is inaccessible. Christ only could reveal Him. He only was acquainted with His nature and character (John x. 15). " No man hath seen God at any time ; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him " (John i. 18). There are in the writings of John four remarkable categorical statements

of the nature of God. God is a spirit (John iv. 24), removed from all that is material; God is light (1 John i. 5), a Being of infinite knowledge and purity; God is life (John v. 26), the source of all life, physical, mental, and spiritual; God is love (1 John iv. 16), a Being of infinite benevolence. But not only has Christ revealed God to us in His discourses and in His works, but He Himself, as the Incarnate Word, is the revelation of God. He is the transcript of the divine character; those feelings which He manifested while on earth were the revelation of the moral character of God. "He that hath seen Me," saith our Lord, "hath seen the Father. Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?" (John xiv. 9, 10). All which is in accordance with the declarations of Paul and with the statements in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

From this peculiar relation of the Incarnate Logos to God arises the idea of the subjection of the Son to the Father, an idea which forms a striking feature of Johannine theology. As a Son, He learned obedience. As the Sent of God, He received from the Father the work given Him to do. At all times and on all occasions He owns this subjection. The doctrines which He taught were communicated to Him by the Father; He received commandment from the Father what He should speak, and He spoke only what He had heard of the Father (John xii. 49, 50). The miracles which He performed were the works which the Father had given Him to do (John v. 36), and were done by Him in His Father's name (John x. 25); it was the Father that dwelleth in Him who doeth the works (John xiv. 10).

When He raised Lazarus from the dead, the miracle was performed in answer to prayer (John xi. 41, 42). He came into the world not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him (John iv. 34), so that at the close of life He could exclaim, "Father, I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John xvii. 4).

The great purpose of the Incarnation was the redemption of the world. The Incarnate Logos was not only the Creator, but the Redeemer of the world, and as such was manifested in the Person of Jesus Christ. For this purpose He came into this world and suffered for our sins. The sufferings and death of Christ for our sins occupy in the theology of John as prominent a place as in the theology of Paul. The sacrificial doctrine of the atonement is distinctly taught. Christ is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world" (John i. 29). Christ laid down His life for us (1 John iii. 16). "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). The Good Shepherd laid down His life for the sheep (John x. 4). The sufferings of Christ are represented as voluntary on His part, as the highest instance of self-sacrifice; no man took His life from Him, but He laid it down of Himself (John x. 18). At the same time they were expiatory. John, in his Epistle, dwells upon the fact that they are a propitiation (*ἱλασμός*) for our sins,¹ so that, in virtue of them, we may be restored to the favour of God. Their efficacy is in some respects universal; Christ died as

¹ 1 John ii. 2, iv. 10, *ἱλασμός* is the translation in the Septuagint of the Hebrew כַּפָּרִים, the covering of sin by means of a sacrifice.

the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John ii. 2). We are saved through the sufferings of Christ; the forgiveness of our sins is the result of the shedding of His blood. But not only does forgiveness flow from the sufferings of Christ, but also purification; there is a cleansing efficacy in Christ's blood (1 John i. 7, 9); we are thus by the death of Christ redeemed not merely from the guilt, but from the pollution of sin.

John especially brings prominently forward the great truth that our redemption arises from the love of God. Christ's death did not excite God's love, but it was God's previous love to the world that constrained Him to send His Son. Christ is the gift of the Father's love, the brightest and most glorious display of His benevolence. "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have eternal life" (John iii. 16). "Herein was the love of God manifested in us, that God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 9, 10). This truth is also stated by Paul in many parts of his Epistles (Rom. v. 8); but John especially emphasises it; it is a point of chief importance in his writings.

In the writings of John there is a special revelation of the Fatherhood of God. The name Father is assigned to God throughout, both in the Gospel and in the Epistle.¹ Christ came to make known the Father to

¹ The name Father, as assigned to God, is used by John 98 times in his Gospel and 15 times in his Epistles.

us—to reveal the heart of God. He speaks of God as Father, as the Father, as the living Father. He is the Son of God, and, by taking upon Himself our nature, He confers this divine relationship upon the children of men; they are the sons of God. God is not only the Creator, but the Father of the human race. In one sense, indeed, this is not a new revelation of God. In the Old Testament God is often spoken of as the Father of His theocratic people. Israel is His son, His first-born.¹ Even the Greeks speak of Zeus as the father of men and gods. The whole character of God is by John summed up in one attribute, “God is love” (1 John iv. 8). He loved the world as a father yearns for the return of his prodigal children; and this Fatherhood, lost to us and forfeited by sin, is, by the interposition of Christ, restored to all those who believe. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God” (1 John iii. 1).

In the idea of redemption the idea of sin is involved. The Incarnate Logos came to deliver us from evil, and sin is that evil into which we had fallen. With Paul, sin is chiefly regarded in a legal point of view as a transgression of law; with Peter, chiefly in an ethical point of view, as a moral defect, as that which corrupts and pollutes the soul; and with James, chiefly in a derivative point of view, as the outcome of an evil nature; whilst John regards it chiefly in a privative point of view, as alienation from God, the loss of spiri-

¹ Exod. iv. 22. In the Old Testament God is generally spoken of as the Father, not of individuals, but of the nation.

tual life. Sin is lawlessness (*ἀνομία*), (1 John iii. 4), estrangement from the holy law of God. The soul is cut off from God, and is in a state of spiritual death. As sin is the revolt from the law of God, and as this law is summed up in love, so according to John the absence of love, whether in the form of selfishness or positive hatred, constitutes the essence of sin (1 John ii. 9; iii. 15; iv. 20). Sin is universal in humanity; it belongs to the flesh (*σάρξ*): "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John iii. 6). There is no reference, however, by John to the origin of sin; its existence and universality are stated as facts; but how sin entered into the world is not mentioned.

We are delivered from sin and made partakers of the redemption procured by Christ by means of faith. Faith has in the theology of John as great importance assigned to it as in the theology of Paul; so that the same answer to the question, What must I do to be saved? is given by both Apostles. "This is the work of God, that you believe on Him whom He has sent" (John vi. 29). Faith has its origin in the antecedent grace of God; it is the gift of God: no man can come to the Son except the Father who hath sent Him draw him (John vi. 44). Its nature, according to John, is very simple; it is a belief in God's testimony concerning Christ. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for the witness of God is this, that He hath borne witness concerning His Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him; he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar, because he hath not believed in the witness that

God hath borne concerning His Son. And the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (1 John v. 9 11). Saving faith, then, is belief in the great declaration that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; in other words, in the incarnation of the Word of God. It is the acceptance of this truth with the heart; the reliance on Christ for eternal life. This is that principle which brings us into living union with Christ; it is the bond of connection between the soul and the Saviour; it brings the soul into touch with Jesus. Hence faith is the source of spiritual life; it rescues the soul from that state of spiritual death in which it is by reason of its sinful nature, and infuses into it a new and divine life; the sinner, by simply believing in Christ, passes at once from death to life: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God" (1 John v. 1); he draws life from the living Saviour, to whom he is united by faith. Faith restores men to the Fatherhood of God. Those who believe on the Son receive power to become the sons of God (John i. 12). By faith believers are not merely assured of a future salvation, but they are already saved. According to John, salvation is a present blessing: "Whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have (already possess) eternal life" (John iii. 16).

The agency of the Holy Spirit in our redemption is not overlooked in Johannine theology; on the contrary, a prominent place is assigned to it; indeed, we have in the Fourth Gospel a special revelation of the Spirit and His work. In no part of Scripture is the personality of the Holy Spirit more distinctly taught than in the last

discourses of our Lord, as recorded by John. Personal activities and feelings are ascribed to the Spirit. He is mentioned as another Comforter distinct from our Lord ; He was to teach the disciples all things ; He was to show them things to come ; He was to testify of Christ ; He was to convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The advent of the Spirit was to succeed Christ's Ascension (John vii. 39) ; the first Comforter had to depart before the second Comforter should come (John xvi. 7) ; He was to be sent by the exalted Christ ; and accordingly we find that it was after the Ascension, on the great day of Pentecost, that the Spirit was sensibly poured out upon the Church. His great office was to glorify Christ, to take of the things which were Christ's and to show them to the disciples (John xvi. 14). He was not to speak of Himself, but to reveal that which He knew of the Father (John xvi. 13). He proceeds from the Father, and dwells in the heart of believers. He was so to quicken the memory of the disciples as to bring all things to their remembrance whatever Christ had taught them, and so to perpetuate the instructions of our Lord for the benefit of the Church (John xiv. 26). As the Comforter, He would console the disciples in all their troubles ; as the Spirit of conviction, He would convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment ; and as the Spirit of holiness, He would abide with the Church even to the end of time.

Especially is the Holy Spirit the author of the new life in the soul. The doctrine of the new birth forms an important part of the theology of John. It is described to us in the discourse of our Lord with Nico-

demus, a discourse which was probably delivered in the presence of John. It is declared essential to a man's entrance into the kingdom of God that he be born again, and this new birth is ascribed to the agency of the Holy Spirit. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John iii. 5, 6). By this new birth a new life is implanted in the soul, the sinner passes from death into life; he is born of the Spirit. And indeed this new life is the groundwork of John's religious system. With Paul the groundwork is righteousness; hence God is regarded as the Justifier of the ungodly, and hence the most prominent doctrine with Paul is justification by faith. But with John the groundwork is life—a new life-principle implanted in the human soul; and hence he speaks little of righteousness or of justification, but dwells chiefly on love as the essence of the new life. And this life is not merely the precursor of eternal life, but it is eternal life itself; it is life without interruption and without end; it is not arrested by death; over it death has no power: "Whosoever liveth and believeth on Me shall never die" (John xi. 26). With John the present is always prominent; the future is hardly distinguished from it; salvation and eternal life are matters of present enjoyment.¹

* Christ is the Life of the world. He is "the way, the truth and the life." He is not only the source of all

¹ By many eternal life is considered as the keynote of John's Gospel. "This is the promise which He promised us, even the life eternal" (1 John ii. 25).

natural life as the Creator of the world, but is especially the source of all spiritual life, as the Redeemer of the world. He bestows life upon all who come to Him. Faith is the living bond of connection to the Saviour through which the current of spiritual life flows; when this connection is formed, then life is the result. In the Incarnate Logos is life. "God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (1 John v. 11, 12). The Holy Spirit, the author and the sustainer of this spiritual life, is the Spirit of Jesus Christ—the Spirit who was bestowed upon Him without measure, and whom He communicates to His disciples. Nay, more; John teaches us that all good in man, all his holy thoughts, and purposes, and aims, proceed from Christ; that He is the great source and inspirer of all that is pure and holy; so that the virtues of the heathen, of Socrates, of Plato, of Cicero, of Marcus Aurelius, instead of being, as Augustine represents them, only splendid sins, are the effects of Christ's Spirit. So also the glimpses of truth embodied in the religions, and still more in the lofty theologies of the ancient world, are due to a partial illumination by the same Spirit: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John i. 4); "He lighteth every man coming into the world" (John i. 9).

From this results the mystical idea of union to Christ. Christ dwells in the hearts of believers by His Spirit, and they are united to Him by faith. In no writings of the New Testament is the mystical union between Christ and believers more dwelt upon. The strongest

metaphors are employed to represent that union. The believer is said to eat Christ's flesh and to drink His blood (John vi. 56). The life of Christ is said to circulate in the believer as the sap circulates in the vine (John xv. 4, 5). Christ is said to dwell in the believer, and the believer in Christ. Nay, this union is so represented by John as a union with God Himself; by believing on Christ as the Son of God, and by being possessed of the grace of love which constitutes the nature of God, believers are united to God and made partakers of His nature. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God. And we know and have believed the love which God hath in us. God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him" (1 John iv. 15, 16). Hence all spiritual life proceeds from Christ; it is because Christ lives that we live also; we live in the fountain of life. This doctrine of life in Christ, taught by Paul when he says, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," has greater prominence given to it in the writings of John.

Another peculiarity in John's theology is the pre-eminence assigned to love. Paul also gives the pre-eminence to love (1 Cor. xiii. 13); but this grace so pervades the discourses of our Lord in the teaching of the Fourth Gospel and the Epistle of John, that it absorbs all other graces. Faith and works find their goal in love. The source of all love is God; God is love, and love is of God (1 John iv. 7, 8). The love of God is especially seen in the gift of His Son; and the infinite love of Christ, in taking upon Himself

human nature and in suffering for us, is the reflection of the love of God. This love of God and Christ begets in man love to God. "We love, because He first loved us" (1 John iv. 19). And from this love to God flows love to the brethren: "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God; he that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John iv. 7, 8). If we are partakers of the divine nature we must love one another; love is the only true evidence of the new life: "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" (1 John iii. 14). Hence the new life, which is the life of God in the human soul, can only be ascertained by the application of this test; if love be absent, the life is absent; there may be a body of dead works, but there is no living spirit. At the same time, perhaps, the love of John is not so comprehensive as that of Paul: it appears to be chiefly confined to the brethren, that is, to fellow-Christians; whereas the love of Paul is universal in its extent, and embraces the human race. John certainly speaks of God as loving the world, and of Christ as the Saviour of all men; but the prominence is given to brotherly love rather than to philanthropy.

But there is the counterpart of this. Love to Christ will show itself in hatred to all that is opposed to Christ. If we love the good, we will hate the evil. Now, according to John's view, as prominently brought forward both in his Gospel and in his Epistle, the world is the opponent of Christ. Christ in His pre-existent state was the Creator of the world, and in His incarnate state He

came to save the world; but the world in its existing state, the world in its views and principles, is at enmity with God. Christ is Light, and the world is the region of darkness. Christ is Life, and in the world death reigns. Believers are cautioned against the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John ii. 15). The world is doomed; it is condemned already, and shall finally be destroyed. Believers are called out of the world; when they believe in Christ, they belong no longer to the anti-Christian world; they pass from the kingdom of death and darkness into the kingdom of life and light.¹

Satan is regarded as "the prince of the world" (John xii. 31; xiv. 30; xvi. 11); he is the ruler of that world which is opposed to the kingdom of Christ: "The whole world lieth in the evil one" (1 John v. 19). All evil proceeds from him; he is a liar and a murderer from the beginning (John viii. 44); and all the sins of men, from the fratricide of Cain to the treachery of Judas, are ascribed to his inspiration. He is the negation of that light, and life, and love which constitute the nature and character of God. All men are arranged under two hostile powers; they either belong to Christ or to His rival the devil: "He that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not right-

¹ For a full statement of John's view of the world, see Lücke's *Commentary on the Epistles of John*, pp. 63 ff.

eousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (1 John iii. 8, 10).

But although Christ and Satan are represented as two hostile powers, the one the prince of light and the other the prince of darkness, it must not be supposed that there is anything approaching to Manichæism taught by John, or, as Reuss and Hilgenfeld¹ assert, that the doctrine taught is a Gnostic dualism, as if the principles of good and evil were alike eternal. It is true that there is no direct reference to the fall of Satan and the evil angels, nor any allusion to the fall of man. It is indeed asserted that Satan sinned from the beginning, and was a murderer from the beginning. But this expression, "from the beginning," does not necessarily imply that Satan was originally and by nature an evil being, but may denote either, as Lechler interprets it, from the creation of man,² or, as Weiss renders it, before men sinned.³ Not only is God represented as the Creator of all things without exception, through Christ the Logos, but Satan is entirely dependent on God, and will yet be completely overcome by Christ. "To this end was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John iii. 8).

The conflict between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan is represented as carried on incessantly. This conflict was waged in pre-Christian times, but it became intensified when Christ came into the

¹ Hilgenfeld goes the extravagant (blasphemous?) length of affirming that Jesus speaks of the God of the Jews as the father of the devil, in the words *ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστὶ* (John viii. 44).

² Lechler's *Apostolic Times*, vol. ii. p. 186.

³ Weiss' *Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 394.

world (1 John iii. 8). When the prince of this world comes, he finds nothing in Christ (John xiv. 31). Christ has overcome the world in its antagonism to His people. None of His people shall perish, and no one shall snatch them out of His hand (John x. 28). And He is enabled to triumph over all His enemies, and to exclaim, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John xii. 31). And so also believers, deriving their strength from Him, are enabled to overcome the evil one. "I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the evil one" (1 John ii. 13, 14).

In the Gospel and the Epistles there is not much allusion to eschatological points. In the First and Second Epistles there are several references to Antichrist: "It is the last hour; and as ye heard that Antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many Antichrists; whereby ye know that it is the last hour" (1 John ii. 18). By Antichrist is meant not the substitute, but the opponent of Christ. According to John, and also to Paul, Antichrist was to make his appearance in the last hour, that is, probably, in the great conflict which shall precede the final consummation of all things.¹ There was, according to John, a plurality in his manifestation; one Antichrist and yet many Antichrists—many powers or influences at work, similarly opposed to Christ. John especially specified as Antichrists those who called in question the true humanity of Christ—the Gnostics of his day: "Many deceivers are gone forth into the

¹ See Westcott on the *Epistle of John*, p. 67, *in loco*.

world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the Antichrist" (2 John 7). "Every spirit which confesseth not Jesus is not of God; and this is the spirit of the Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already" (1 John iv. 3). Antichrist himself was a future manifestation, but the spirit of Antichrist was already in the Church and in the world. So also with Paul, Antichrist, or "the man of sin," was to be manifested in the future history of the Church, yet the mystery of iniquity was already working in his days (2 Thess. ii. 7). Paul imparts a greater unity to his idea of Antichrist; he speaks of him as a single adversary, whereas John alludes to many Antichrists. With Paul, Antichrist has yet to be revealed; whilst with John, Antichrist is both present and future.

In the writings of John the judgment is represented as present as well as future; here, as in other particulars, the future is absorbed in the present. There is a present judgment. The sifting process is going on; men are being separated into two classes—into those who are drawn toward Christ, and those who are repelled from Christ: "Now is the judgment of this world" (John xii. 31). "He that believeth on Christ is not judged; he that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God" (John iii. 18). "For judgment," says our Lord, "came I into this world" (John ix. 39).¹ But

¹ "The judgment," observes Neander, "John considers as something present, as a fact inseparable from the redemption of mankind and the publication of the Gospel. There follows, as a necessary consequence, a

whilst there is a present, there is also a future judgment. Christ speaks of the last day, when men shall be judged (John xii. 48); and in the Epistle there is mention of the day of judgment (1 John iv. 17). Christ Himself shall be the Judge, and before His tribunal all men shall be assembled. The Father judgeth no man, but He hath given all judgment to the Son, and hath given Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man (John v. 22, 27).

So also the resurrection of the dead is represented as both present and future. There is a present resurrection, when a new life is imparted to those who are spiritually dead; and to this our Lord alludes when He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live" (John v. 25). And there is a future resurrection, when all the wicked as well as the righteous shall be raised, not as regards their souls, but as regards their bodies: "Marvel not at this; for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John v. 28, 29). And as Christ is the Judge of the world, who decides the destinies of the human race, so He is also the Resurrection, at whose command all men shall come forth from their graves: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John xi. 25).

separation between those who with susceptible minds receive the divine, and those who exclude themselves by their unsusceptibility."—*Planting of Christianity*, vol. ii. pp. 48, 49.

The state of the blessed after death is not much dwelt upon by John, either in his Gospel or in his Epistle. Salvation is regarded by him as present, and heaven as enjoyed on earth. Before His departure our Lord comforted His disciples with the thought of the many mansions in His Father's house; He promises to come again and receive them to Himself, and He prays for them that they may behold His glory. In the Epistle John tells us that the nature of the future state of the blessed is not disclosed, but that believers will be transformed into the image of Christ, and that this resemblance to Christ, which will be perfected by seeing Christ as He is, will constitute the happiness and the holiness of the redeemed (1 John iii. 2). Eternal life is enjoyed in this world, when God in our new birth breathes into us His Holy Spirit, and when we were united to Christ, the source of all spiritual life. But in heaven it will be enjoyed in all its fulness and in all its perfection; life without weakness or decay; life untainted by sin and untrammelled by infirmity; life even that which Jesus Christ Himself possessed, the life of God in the soul. "This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ" (John xvii. 3).

Such is a brief statement of Johannine theology. The two most considerable writers of the New Testament, who may be denominated the two theologians of Christianity, are Paul and John. In all essential points these two Apostles are in perfect harmony. Both insist on the divinity of Jesus Christ, His manifestation in the flesh, the atoning nature of His sufferings, the state

of sin in which man is placed, the necessity of faith as the means of salvation, the agency of the Holy Ghost, the final judgment, and the resurrection of the dead. "Independent of each other in their origin and in their composition," observes Reuss, "the systems of these two eminent theologians among the Apostles agree in all that is essential."¹ But whilst they agree in the matter of their theology, they differ greatly in their method of stating it. Paul addresses himself to the reason; he appeals to our intellectual faculties; he argues, demonstrates, and draws inferences. John seldom addresses the intellect; he appeals to the heart; he states his propositions in the simplest terms, and enforces them merely by an antithetical repetition of the same sentiment. Paul is argumentative, John is contemplative; the theology of the one may be termed speculative, the theology of the other is mystical;² the objective element prevails in the one, the subjective in the other. So also the starting-points of these two Apostolic writers are different. Paul proceeds upwards from man to God; he starts from the disease, and proceeds to show the remedy. John starts from God and the incarnation of the Divine Logos, and proceeds to show the reason of that incarnation in the salvation of the human race; his system of revealed truth is a true theology. With Paul the incarnation is an essential part of the humiliation of Christ (Phil. ii. 5-8); whereas with John it is rather to be considered as the manifestation of the

¹ Reuss' *History of Christian Theology*, vol. ii. p. 513.

² We do not deny that the mystical element is also contained in Paul's Epistles, but it does not occupy so large a space as it does in the writings of John.

glory of the Logos and the exaltation of humanity (John i. 14; xiii. 31). This difference may in part be accounted for from the personal experience of the writers. Paul, the former persecutor, bowed as the disciple before the Master, and was eager to convert the world to Christ. John, the beloved disciple, could not forget his intimacy with Jesus, and thus regarded the exalted Saviour as his heavenly Friend, and was desirous that all should experience the fulness of His love. Paul's life-object was to diffuse the Gospel, to act as a missionary; whilst John's was to edify the Church, to infuse the love of Christ into the hearts of believers. "Both are striving with all the powers of their soul for the same end—an end, however, which to the one seems distant, to the other near. John, grasping the hand of the Saviour, outstretched to him as a friend, and never letting it go, has already ceased to feel that hunger and thirst which once he had known. Paul, now humbled by the memory of the past, now uplifted by grace, continues to bow as the disciple before the Master, and frankly confesses that he has not yet reached the goal." ¹

¹ Reuss' *History of Christian Theology*, vol. ii. p. 526.

THE PRIVATE LETTERS OF JOHN.¹

IN the canon of the New Testament three private letters are preserved, one ascribed to Paul and two to John ; but these must evidently constitute but a small fragment of the correspondence of the sacred writers. Of course, letter-writing was not so much practised at that time as in our own day ; but still, as we learn both from classical and from patristic remains, it was not uncommon. Frequent allusions are made to it in Scripture. Paul speaks of "epistles of commendation" (2 Cor. iii. 1) in such a manner as to intimate that such letters were not unfrequent. Writing to the Corinthians relative to the general collection which he was making for the Christians at Jerusalem, he says (according to the correct rendering), "When I come, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send by letters to bring your liberality to Jerusalem" (1 Cor. xvi. 3). And we have in the Third Epistle of John a reference to a letter of recommendation which that Apostle sent to the Church, and which is not now extant : "I wrote somewhat unto the Church, but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, received us not" (3 John 9 ; see *supra*, p. 55). Much then of the correspon-

¹ This subject has already been considered in the *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles* ; it is now stated in an abridged form.

dence of the Apostles is lost; of their private letters we have only three, or, if we include the Pastoral Epistles, at the most six; and there are also traces of letters written by St. Paul to Churches which must be regarded as lost Epistles (1 Cor. v. 9; Col. iv. 16). As Meyer observes, when adverting to St. Paul's letters of recommendation: "Hence we see how common in Paul's practice was the writing of epistles. Who knows how many private letters of his, not addressed to churches, have been lost? The only letter of the kind which remains to us (that of Philemon) owes its preservation perhaps to the mere circumstance that it is at the same time addressed to the Church in his house."¹

I.—AUTHENTICITY OF THE EPISTLES.

Two private letters are extant which are ascribed to St. John. On account of their brevity, and the fact of their being written to private individuals, we are not to expect many references to them in the writings of the Fathers, and yet they are not without external attestation. The Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170) asserts that John wrote at least two Epistles. Irenæus (A.D. 180) in two places refers to the Second Epistle and ascribes it to John: "John, the disciple of the Lord, has intensified their condemnation when he enjoins us not to address to them (the heretical teachers) the salutation God-speed; for he says, 'He that bids them God-speed is a partaker with their deeds.'"² And again,

¹ Meyer on *The Epistles to the Corinthians*, on 1 Cor. xvi. 3, n.

² Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, i. 16, 3.

"John, the disciple of the Lord, in his Epistle commands us to avoid them when he says, 'Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.'"¹ Both Epistles are contained in the Old Italic version (A.D. 180). Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 190) speaks of the First Epistle as "the larger Epistle,"² evidently implying that he was acquainted with at least another and shorter Epistle; and in the *Adumbrationes*, found in the Latin translation of Cassiodorus, he observes: "The Second Epistle of John, which is written to virgins, is very simple. It was written to a Babylonian lady by name Electa."³ Origen (A.D. 230) mentions the two shorter Epistles of St. John, but states that they were not generally acknowledged.⁴ Dionysius of Alexandria (A.D. 245) was also acquainted with these two Epistles: "But neither," he observes, "in the Second nor Third Epistle ascribed to John, though they are brief, is the name of John prefixed."⁵ Cyprian (A.D. 248) refers to the Second Epistle of John in his account of the Second Council of Carthage.⁶ Eusebius (A.D. 325) mentions them, but classes them among the *antilegomenoi* or disputed books.⁷ They are recognised by the Councils of Laodicea (A.D. 363) and of Hippo (A.D. 393), and the Third Council of Carthage (A.D. 397).⁸

But the authenticity of these two Epistles rests chiefly upon internal evidence. No possible motive

¹ Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 16, 8.

³ Clement, *Opp.*, ed. Potter, p. 1011.

⁵ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, vii. 25.

⁷ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 25.

² Clement, *Strom.*, ii. 15.

⁴ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, vi. 25.

⁶ Cyprian, *De Hær. Bapt.*

⁸ For external testimonies in favour of these Epistles see *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, pp. 322, 339.

can be assigned for their forgery. They contain no doctrinal statement, support no particular opinion, and are addressed to no particular Church. The indefinite designation of the writer, "the Presbyter," is also at variance with the idea of forgery. Had they been impositions, a more exalted title would have been assigned to the author, in order to impart to them weight and authority. The close resemblances in point of style and thought of the Second Epistle to the First is a presumption that both proceeded from the same author. It has been observed that not less than seven or eight out of the thirteen verses of the Second Epistle are found in the First.¹ On the other hand, the Second and Third Epistles are so identical in style, form, and contents, that they are almost universally acknowledged to have proceeded from the same author. The addresses are alike: "The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth" (2 John 1); "The elder to Gaius, the beloved, whom I love in truth" (3 John 1). The author expresses the same satisfaction with the conduct of his converts: "I rejoiced greatly that I have found certain of thy children walking in the truth" (2 John 4); "Greater joy have I none than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth" (3 John 4). And the Epistles conclude in the same manner: "Having many things to write unto you, I would not write them with paper and ink, but I hope to come unto you and speak face to face" (2 John 12); "I had many things to write, but am unwilling to write them with ink and pen, but I hope

¹ De Wette's *Einleitung in das N. T.*, p. 404 (Eng. trans., p. 362).

shortly to see thee, and we shall speak face to face" (3 John 13, 14).

The Johannine authorship of these Epistles has, however, been frequently questioned. Eusebius mentions a certain person called "John the Presbyter," who lived at Ephesus at the close of the Apostolic times, and whom he distinguishes from John the Apostle. Now in consequence of the title "the Presbyter" (ὁ πρεσβύτερος) being attached to these Epistles, they have been ascribed to this individual. Thus Jerome says, "John wrote one Epistle which is approved by all ecclesiastics and learned men; but the other two, at the beginning of which is 'the Presbyter,' are said to have been written by John the Presbyter, whose sepulchre is at this day shown at Ephesus."¹ This opinion is held by many theologians of the present day, belonging both to the negative and to the positive school of criticism.²

The evidence for the existence of such a person as John the Presbyter, a contemporary of John the Apostle, depends almost entirely on an inference drawn by Eusebius from an ambiguous statement preserved in his history of the Apostolic Father Papias (A.D. 120). Papias, speaking of the care which he took in collecting the traditions of the Apostolic age, says, "If I met with any one who had been a follower of the Presbyters, I made it a point to inquire what were the declarations of the Presbyters: what was said by Andrew, or by Peter, or by Philip, or by Thomas, or by James, or by John, or by Matthew, or any of the Lord's disciples;

¹ Jerome, *Vir. Illustr.*, chap. ix.

² Grotius, Bretschneider, Credner, Wieseler, Ebrard. See Ebrard's *Commentary on St. John's Epistle*, pp. 363-376.

and what Aristion and the Presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say ; for I do not think that I derived so much benefit from books as from the living voice of those who are still surviving.”¹ On this statement Eusebius remarks, “It is proper to observe that the name of John occurs twice. The one John he mentions with Peter and James and Matthew and the other Apostles ; but, in a separate part of his discourse, he ranks the other John with the rest not included in the number of Apostles, placing Aristion before him. He distinguishes him plainly by the name of Presbyter.” Hence Eusebius infers that Papias alludes to two Johns—John the Apostle and John the Presbyter. Dionysius, the Bishop of Alexandria (A.D. 245), had also stated that there were two tombs at Ephesus, each bearing the name of John ;² but he makes no direct allusion to an individual known by the name of John the Presbyter. In short, prior to Eusebius, except it be in this statement of Papias, and possibly in the statement of Dionysius, there is no mention of such a person.

The inference of Eusebius from the statement of Papias has been called in question ; and it has been argued that not two persons of the name of John are mentioned, but only John the Apostle, who is twice named.³ It is to be observed that Papias applied the title “Presbyter” to the Apostles named by him. In the first clause he speaks of what was *said* (εἰπεν) by them, consequently of those traditions which he received at second-hand ;

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39.

² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, vii. 25.

³ So Riggensbach, Keim, Farrar, Plummer, Warfield, Salmon, and Bishop Alexander. On the other hand, Bleek, Düsterdieck, Gebhart, Huther, Westcott, and Bishop Lightfoot admit the existence of John the Presbyter.

and in the second clause of what they *say* (λέγουσι), consequently of those traditions which he received from contemporaries. From John he received traditions of both kinds; reports of what he said when the other Apostles were alive, and of what he says now at the time Papias wrote. It is also to be observed that Papias does not call Aristion a Presbyter, but assigns this name only to John, so that, although placed last, the name distinguishes him. This explanation is not free from objection, but it is plausible; and it is certain that there is no mention of John the Presbyter, as distinguished from John the Apostle, in the writings of any of the Fathers before the time of Eusebius. Irenæus states that Papias was a hearer of John the Apostle and a disciple of Polycarp,¹ not the disciple of John the Presbyter, as Eusebius supposes. Besides, the title "Presbyter" being official, was common to many, and could not designate an otherwise obscure individual; there were many Presbyters belonging to the Church of Ephesus.²

II.—THE PERSONS ADDRESSED.

The Second Epistle is addressed to "the elect lady and her children."³ Who is meant by "the elect lady" is a question which has given rise to different opinions.

¹ Irenæus, *Adv. Hæc.*, v. 33, 4.

² For this ascription of these two Epistles to John the Presbyter, see *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, pp. 328-331. See also an able article on John the Presbyter by Professor Salmon in *Smith's Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. iii. p. 398 ff.

³ ἐκλεκτῇ κυρίᾳ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις αὐτῆς.

Some suppose that it is a metaphorical designation of the Catholic Church; ¹ an opinion which is refuted by the Apostle mentioning his intention of visiting her. Others think that some particular Church is meant; ² but there is no reason to assign a figurative meaning to the expression. Others, thinking that a particular lady is mentioned, suppose that her name was Electa—"the lady Electa" ³—an opinion which has the support of Clemens Alexandrinus; and others think that her name was Kyria, "the elect Kyria," a common female name among the Greeks, being the feminine of Cyrus. ⁴ It is best, however, to render the words indefinitely as in our version, "the elect lady," the name not being given. ⁵ Along with the lady are mentioned her children. This Epistle, then, was addressed to some unknown Christian lady and her family, resident probably in the neighbourhood of Ephesus.

The Third Epistle is addressed to a certain Gaius. ⁶ There are three of this name mentioned in the New Testament: Gaius of Corinth, one of the converts whom Paul himself baptized (1 Cor. i. 14); Gaius of Derbe, one of those who accompanied St. Paul on his last journey to Jerusalem (Acts xx. 4); and Gaius of Macedonia, who was with Paul during the tumult at Ephesus (Acts xix. 29). Each of these has been identified by

¹ Huther, Baur, Hilgenfeld, Ewald, Weiss, Salmon.

² The opinion of Bishops Lightfoot and Wordsworth.

³ So Wetstein, Grotius, and Bishop Middleton.

⁴ The opinion of De Wette, Guericke, Bleek, Neander, Olshausen, Ebrard, and Bishop Alexander.

⁵ So Braune, Farrar, Plummer, Meyrick, and the New Testament Revisers.

⁶ Γαῖος τῷ ἀγαπητῷ.

different writers with the person to whom the Third Epistle of John was addressed. A fourth Gaius, mentioned in the Apostolic Constitutions as being appointed Bishop of Pergamum by John,¹ has also been fixed upon, on account of his connection with John, and on account of the proximity of Pergamum to Ephesus. All these are, however, mere arbitrary suppositions; Gaius, the same as the Latin Caius, is one of the most common names among the Greeks and Romans. The Gaius of this Epistle does not appear to have been a presbyter or office-bearer in any church, but, like Philemon, to whom Paul wrote, a Christian layman of influence. He is commended by the Apostle for his hospitality toward certain brethren and itinerant evangelists. "Beloved, thou doest a faithful work in whatsoever thou doest toward them that are brethren and strangers withal; who bare witness to thy love before the Church; whom thou wilt do well to set forward on their journey worthily of God" (3 John 5, 6).

III.—THE DESIGNS OF THE EPISTLES.

The design of the Second Epistle was to express the Apostle's pleasure at finding the children of the lady to whom he writes walking in the truth. He had met with some of her children at Ephesus, and was greatly impressed with their Christian conduct; and he communicates his approval and the pleasure which he felt to their mother. He also expresses his intention of shortly paying her a visit. But the chief design of the

¹ *Const. Apos.*, vii. 46.

Epistle appears to be to warn the elect lady against the reception of heretical teachers ; and not to allow her benevolence to be imposed upon by those who went about propagating erroneous opinions : “ If any one cometh to you and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting ; for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works ” (2 John 10, 11). The twofold character of the Apostle, his love and his hatred of that which is evil, is here seen.¹

The design of the Third Epistle is entirely different. As the design of the Second Epistle was to forbid the reception of heretical teachers, so the design of the Third Epistle was to commend the reception of travelling evangelists. John had sent certain members of the Ephesian Church as evangelists, with a certificate or letter of recommendation to the Church to which Gaius belonged. Diotrephes, who appears to have occupied an official position in that Church, repudiated the Epistle and the authority of the Apostle, rejected the brethren sent by him, and threatened with excommunication those who received them. Gaius, on the contrary, an influential layman, received them, and treated them with hospitality, and probably by pecuniary aid brought them on their journey. On their return to Ephesus these evangelists reported to the Apostle the reception which they met with. Hence the occasion of this letter, wherein the Apostle severely reprimands the haughty

¹ “ We,” observes Bishop Alexander, “ very often look upon heresy or unbelief with the tolerance of curiosity rather than of love. At all events, the Gospel has its intolerance as well as tolerance. St. John certainly had this. His denunciations have had a function in Christendom as well as his love.”—*The Epistles of St. John*, p. 290.

and overbearing conduct of Diotrephes, and praises the generosity and kindness of Gaius.

The character of Diotrephes is vividly described ; he stands before us as the type of all haughty and overbearing ecclesiastics : "I wrote somewhat unto the Church ; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not. Therefore, if I come, I will bring to remembrance his works which he doeth, prating against us with wicked words ; and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and them that would he forbiddeth, and casteth them out of the Church" (3 John 9, 10). Diotrephes occupied an official position in the Church ; he could exercise the power of preventing the reception of those itinerant evangelists. In all probability he was one of the presbyters of the Church, or, if a modified episcopacy then existed, its bishop. He is not censured for heretical opinions ; there is nothing in the Epistle to intimate that he had imbibed the errors of the Doceti ; it is for his conduct that he is censured, for exercising his episcopal power in an imperious manner, even in opposition to John himself. When we consider the opposition that Paul met with from false teachers, it is not to be wondered at that Diotrephes should have the audacity to resist the authority of the Apostle John ; and most certainly the class of which Diotrephes is the representative is not extinct in the Christian Church. .

Contrasted with Diotrephes is a certain Demetrius : "Demetrius hath the witness of all men and of the truth itself ; yea, we also bear witness, and thou knowest that our witness is true" (3 John 12). Some

suppose that Demetrius was one of those itinerant evangelists whom Diotrephes had cast out, or one of those who would have received the brethren, but whom Diotrephes prevented; but it is more probable that he was another evangelist whom John now sent to Gaius with this letter of recommendation.

In the Apostolic times it would appear that evangelists were sent forth by the Apostles or by the Churches, either to act as missionaries in the conversion of the heathen, or to arouse and confirm believers in the faith. Timothy and Titus appear to have been such evangelists; and so also were Epaphras, Aristarchus, Trophimus, Tychicus, and many of the disciples of Paul. These itinerant evangelists were of different characters. Some were false apostles, and introduced pernicious errors; and some were covetous men, who made gain of preaching the Gospel (2 Cor. xi. 13; 1 Tim. vi. 5). Others were true apostles, faithful ministers of Christ. Hence great care was to be exercised in judging them; some were to be rejected, and others were to be received. And we have this difference of treatment stated in these two Epistles. John exhorts the elect lady not to receive into her house those who brought not the true doctrine (2 John 10), whilst he exhorts Gaius to receive and entertain those sent by him, because "for His name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles" (3 John 7). Eusebius gives the following account of these itinerant evangelists:—
"Most of the disciples at that time (the early days of the Church), animated with a more ardent love of the divine word, had first fulfilled the Saviour's precept by

distributing their substance to the needy. Afterwards leaving their country, they performed the office of evangelists to those who had not yet heard the faith, whilst, with a noble ambition to proclaim Christ, they also delivered to them the books of the Holy Gospels. After laying the foundation of the faith in foreign parts as the particular object of their mission, and after appointing others as shepherds of the flocks, and committing these to the care of those that had been recently introduced, they went again to other regions and nations with the grace and co-operation of God.”¹

These evangelists were furnished with letters of recommendation similar to this Third Epistle of John, which was a letter of recommendation to the evangelist Demetrius. But, besides these letters, the Churches were empowered to judge of their qualifications. In that remarkable document, the *Didaché*,² recently discovered, and which is supposed to belong to the close of the Apostolic age, regulations are laid down for the reception or rejection of these travelling evangelists. The doctrine of the evangelists was to be tested; they must preach the pure Gospel: “Whosoever comes and teaches you all things before spoken, receive him. But if the teacher turn aside and teach another teaching, so as to overthrow this, hear him not; but if he teach so as to promote righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord, receive him in the Lord.”³ The motive of their conduct was to be tested; they must not be

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 37.

² *Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων*. This work is referred to by Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 25, and called by him *τῶν ἀποστόλων αἱ λεγόμεναι διδασκαί*.

³ *Didaché*, c. xi. 1, 2.

actuated by mercenary motives, making a gain of godliness: "Let every apostle that cometh to you be received in the Lord. But he shall not remain longer than one day; if, however, there be need, then the next day; but if he remain three days, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle departs, let him take nothing except bread enough till he lodge again; but if he ask for money, he is a false prophet. Whosoever says in the spirit, Give me money or any other thing, ye shall not listen to him; but if he bid you give to others that lack, let no one condemn him."¹ Sloth also was to be discountenanced in these evangelists; if they remained in a place, they must work. "Let every one that cometh in the Lord's name be received, but afterward ye shall test and know him. If he who comes is a wayfarer, help him as much as you can; but he shall not remain with you longer than two or three days, unless there be necessity. If he wishes to settle with you, being an artisan, let him work, and so eat; but if he have no trade, provide according to your understanding, that no idler live with you as a Christian; beware of him."² These regulations refer to the reception of strangers in general, but with special reference to the reception of evangelists.

We have in these two Epistles of John, taken in connection with this almost contemporary document, the *Didaché*, a view of the ecclesiastical organisation as it existed at this period. In the Apostolic times there were especially two orders—bishops and deacons.

¹ *Didaché*, c. xi. 4-6, 12.

² *Idem.*, c. xii. 1-5; see Schaff's *The Oldest Church Manual*, pp. 199-205.

Bishops and presbyters were different names for the same order ; it was not until the close of the Apostolic era that they were distinguished. It would also appear that every Church had a plurality of presbyters ; congregational episcopacy was a subsequent development. So also in the *Didaché* there is mention only of bishops and deacons, not of bishops, presbyters, and deacons : "Elect therefore for yourselves bishops and deacons, worthy of the Lord, men meek, and not lovers of money, and truthful and approved ; for they too minister to you the ministry of the prophets and teachers."¹

But besides these two local or congregational orders attached to each particular Church, there was in Apostolic times a third order, that of itinerant evangelists, who were attached to no particular Church, but went from place to place preaching the Gospel. The order of the evangelist appears to be as scriptural as that of a bishop or deacon. Paul mentions it when enumerating the ministerial offices : "He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers" (Eph. iv. 11). The offices of apostle and prophet may have passed away with the miraculous gifts conferred on the Church, but there is no reason to suppose that the office of evangelist has ceased.² Mention is made in the New Testament of those who occupied this office, as Timothy and Titus. "Do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. iv. 5), writes Paul to Timothy. And Philip the deacon is called the evangelist : "We entered into the house of Philip

¹ *Didaché*, c. xv. 1.

² "The evangelists," observes Schaff, "seem to have been an order of ministers standing between the Apostles and pastors and teachers."

(τοῦ εὐαγγελιστοῦ) the evangelist" (Acts xxi. 8). There are distinct traces of this office in the two later Epistles of John, and it is fully recognised in the Didaché and in the writings of the Fathers.¹ The duties of the evangelist were chiefly to diffuse the Gospel among the heathen, and hence it was an office somewhat similar to that of the modern missionary. But it would also appear from this Third Epistle of John, and from the missions of Timothy and Titus, that the evangelist was sent to Churches already established to arouse believers and to confirm them in the faith. He was attached to no particular congregation, but was an itinerant preacher.²

IV.—TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

In both these Epistles the Apostle promises a visit; in the one to "the elect lady," and in the other to "Gaius, the beloved." John, during his long residence of more than thirty years in Ephesus, was accustomed to make journeys of episcopal visitation. Eusebius mentions that he undertook the superintendence of the Churches of Proconsular Asia, and thus he himself did the work of an evangelist, "About this time the beloved disciple of Jesus, John the Apôstle and evange-

¹ Eusebius calls Pantænus an evangelist; and he observes, "There were even yet many evangelists of the Word, who were ardently striving to employ their inspired zeal after the Apostolic example, to increase and build up the Divine Word."—*Hist. Eccl.*, v. 10.

² Hatch's *Bampton Lectures*, "The Organisation of Early Christian Churches," pp. 44, 45. It appears to be of special importance in our times, with our overgrown populations and our so-called lapsed masses, when many are living as heathens in this Christian country, that the office of evangelist should be revived.

list, still surviving, governed the Churches of Asia, after his return from exile on the island of Patmos and the death of Domitian.”¹ So also in a passage already quoted, Clemens Alexandrinus states that John was accustomed to visit the neighbouring Churches of the Gentiles. It is improbable that these journeys of visitation were deferred until after his return from Patmos, when John was old and infirm; rather they may have been continued throughout his whole residence in Ephesus. When he was about to write these Epistles, he was on the eve of starting on one of these journeys. We are in entire ignorance of the residence of the “elect lady” and of Gaius, whether in the same, or, as is more probable, in different cities; but doubtless it was in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, in one or other of the cities of Proconsular Asia. The time of writing these letters was during the Apostle’s residence in Ephesus, but whether before or after his return from Patmos cannot be determined. His ability to make journeys of visitation would argue in favour of an earlier date; whilst the condition of the Church, and especially the mention of the Doceti, who did not appear until near the close of the Apostolic era, are in favour of a later date. There is no reason to doubt that the place of composition was Ephesus, the centre of the Apostle’s activity during the last thirty years of his life.

¹ *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 23.

THE APOCALYPSE OF JOHN.

LITERATURE.—It is impossible to enumerate all the books, articles, dissertations, and monographs which have been written on the Apocalypse, either as a whole or on special topics. The following are the most important works :—1. *Introductions*.—The Apocalypse is treated more or less fully in the Introductions to the New Testament of Eichhorn, Credner, Hug, Michaelis (translated by Bishop Marsh), De Wette, Bleek, Mangold, Guericke, Davidson, Hilgenfeld, Reuss, Holtzmann, Weiss, Weizäcker, Farrar, Salmon. 2. *Articles in Encyclopædias*.—The most important of these are by Davidson in Kitto's *Cyclopædia*; Rev. W. T. Bullock in Smith's *Biblical Dictionary*; Reuss in Ersch and Grüber's *Biblical Dictionary*; Harnack in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; and Warfield in Schaff's *Encyclopædia*, based on Herzog. 3. *Commentaries*.—The most important are those of Ewald (Leipzig, 1828); Lücke (Bonn, 1832); Hengstenberg (Berlin, 1842); Moses Stuart (Edinburgh, 1847); De Wette (Leipzig, 1848); Ebrard (forming one of Olshausen's *Commentaries*, 1859); Alford (*Greek Testament*, new edition, 1862); Volkmar (Zurich, 1862); Ewald (*Die Johannische Schriften*, Göttingen, 1862); Düsterdieck (forming one of Meyer's series, Göttingen, 1868; 3te Auflage, 1877); Wordsworth (*Greek Testament*, second edition, 1875); Reuss (*L'Apocalypse*, 1878); Lee (in *Speaker's Commentary*, 1881); Milligan (in Schaff's *Commentary*, 1883, also in the *Expositor's Bible*, 1889); Spitta (Halle, 1889); Randell (in *Pulpit Commentary*, London, 1890); Simcox (in *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, 1890). 4. *Special Works*.—Among these may be mentioned the following :—Elliot's *Horæ Apocalypticæ* (London, second edition, 1846); Dannemann, *Wer ist der Verfasser der Offenbarung Johannis* (Hanover, 1841); Auberlen, *Daniel und die Offenbarung Johannis* (Edinburgh, 1856, translation); Waldegrave's *Bampton Lectures for 1850*; Wordsworth's *Hulsean Lectures*, second edition, 1849; Bleek, *Vorlesungen über d. Ap.*, 1862 (English translation, 1875); Renan's *L'Antichrist*, 1873; Gebbert's *Der*

Lehrbegriff der Ap., 1877 (English translation, 1878); Völter, *Die Entstehung der Apokalypse*, 1882; Milligan's *Baird Lectures*, 1885. Other books are mentioned when treating of the different systems of interpretation and of the Millennium.

THE TITLE.

THE title given to this book in the *textus receptus* is Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου; but the preponderance of manuscript authority is in favour of the abbreviated form Ἀποκάλυψις Ἰωάννου. The word ἀποκάλυψις denotes unveiling, uncovering, and is generally translated in our versions *revelation*.¹ It occurs so frequently in the Epistles of Paul, that the term may be considered as peculiarly Pauline. In general it denotes a disclosure by God or Christ of truths which are in themselves secret or unknown (Rom. xvi. 25; Eph. iii. 3). Thus we read of “the revelation of the righteous judgment of God,” “the revelation of the sons of God” (Rom. ii. 5; viii. 19). In both these passages it has an eschatological reference to the disclosures of the last day, though the word is not necessarily eschatological. The expression ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ occurs in Gal. i. 12, and ἀποκάλυψις Κυρίου in 2 Cor. xii. 1,² in the sense that the Gospel was imparted to the Apostle by the Lord Jesus Christ: He was the ‘Revealer.’ Similarly here ἀποκάλυψις Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ denotes that Christ is the author or bestower of the revelation. Here the reference is to future events; and hence “apocalypse” has come to be

¹ Compounded of ἀπό, from, and καλύπτω, to cover; hence, to remove the covering, to uncover.

² Similar expressions are also used in 1 Cor. i. 7; 1 Peter i. 7, 13.

used in a technical sense to denote a certain kind of prophetic writings. Apocalyptic writings are distinguished from those which are simply prophetic by their predictions referring to the last days, and by their preponderant use of symbols and visions. The Apocalypse of John is the only writing of this nature in the New Testament, but it finds its analogy in the Old Testament in the Book of Daniel, the Prophecies of Zechariah, and the latter portion of the Prophecies of Ezekiel.

I.—THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE APOCALYPSE.

The references to the Apocalypse which have been adduced from the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, namely, Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, Polycarp, and Hermas, are too vague and uncertain to be relied on. Some expressions in the Epistles of Ignatius and in the Martyrdom of Polycarp may perhaps be allusions to the Apocalypse.¹ The nearest approach to a distinct resemblance is in the Visions of Hermas; but it is doubtful whether the resemblance is not rather to the Book of Daniel.²

The first definite reference is that made by Papias (A.D. 120). According to two commentators on the Apocalypse, Andreas, belonging to the fifth century, and Arethas, belonging to the sixth, both Bishops of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, Papias referred to the Apocalypse, and regarded it as an inspired writing. Thus

¹ Kirchhofer's *Quellensammlung*, pp. 296-300; Charteris' *Canonicity*, pp. 336-338; Elliot's *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, vol. i. pp. 15-20, 2nd edit.

² Lardner's *Works*, vol. i. p. 311 ff., 4to edition.

Andreas says, "Concerning the inspiration of the book (the Apocalypse, *περὶ τοῦ θεοπνεύστου τῆς βίβλου*), it is not necessary to say anything, since those blessed men, Gregory the Theologian, Cyril, as also the ancients Papias, Irenæus, Methodius, and Hippolytus, testify to its credibility."¹ From these words it is evident that Papias regarded the Apocalypse as an inspired writing, and most probably as the writing of the Apostle John, to whom it was at an early age assigned. And this is the more credible as Papias would find some foundation for his strong Chiliastic views in the account which the Apocalypse gives of Christ's reign with His saints for a thousand years. To this it has been objected that Eusebius makes no mention of this opinion of Papias; but this objection is not of much weight, as Eusebius was under no necessity to state the peculiar views of Papias, especially as he was prejudiced against them, and had a low estimate of his ability; and as an *argumentum e silentio*, it is very precarious.

The Apocalypse is directly assigned to John by Justin Martyr (A.D. 147). Eusebius tells us that Justin "mentions the Revelation of John, plainly calling it the work of the Apostle, in his discussion with Tryphon."² Accordingly, in the dialogue with Tryphon we have the following words: "Further, there was a certain man with us whose name is John, one of the Apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed on Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem, and that thereafter the

¹ Andreas, *Proleg. in Apoc.*, quoted in Kirchhofer's *Quellensammlung*, p. 300.

² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iv. 18.

eternal resurrection and judgment of all men would take place.”¹ This testimony is important, not only on account of its early date, but also because Justin, though frequently adverting to the other books of Scripture, refrains from mentioning the names of their authors. Besides, as Weiss remarks, “Justin’s direct statement that it was written by John, one of the Apostles of Christ, is the more important, since his residence was in Palestine, and he had learned in his travels to know the Alexandrian and Roman Churches, as also those of Asia Minor, where the book had its origin, and therefore represented the tradition of the whole Church of the second century.”²

Eusebius, in giving a list of the numerous works of Melito (A.D. 170), mentions a treatise on the Apocalypse of John;³ and Jerome tells us that Melito wrote a book concerning the devil and concerning the Apocalypse.⁴ The testimony of Melito is the more important as he was Bishop of Sardis, one of the seven Asiatic Churches.

The celebrated Muratorian Canon (A.D. 170) has the following reference to the Apocalypse: “John in the Apocalypse, though writing to the seven Churches, speaks to all.”⁵

Eusebius informs us that Apollonius (A.D. 170) in his refutation of Montanism, made use of proofs from

¹ *Dial. cum Tryphone*, c. lxxxii.

² Weiss’ *Einleitung in das N. T.*, p. 360; Eng. trans., vol. ii. p. 51.

³ *Hist. Eccl.*, iv. 26.

⁴ Hieron, *De Vir. Illustr.*, c. xxiv.

⁵ “Et Joannes enim in Apocalypsi licet septem Ecclesiis scribat, tamen omnibus dicit.”

the Apocalypse of John.¹ The Apocalypse was one of the books of Scripture on which the Montanists relied, yet Apollonius uses it in arguing against their views. This early use of the Apocalypse by orthodox and heretics alike strengthens the argument in favour of its genuineness.

Eusebius also informs us that Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch (A.D. 170), in a work which has the title "Against the Heresy of Hermogenes," "makes use of testimonies from the Apocalypse, besides other catechetical works."²

In the Epistle of the Churches of Vienne and Lyons (A.D. 180) there are several unmistakable citations from the Apocalypse. Thus of Vettius Epagathus it is said, "He was a true disciple of Christ, following the Lamb wherever He goes" (Rev. xiv. 4). The persecution of the Christians occurred that "the Scripture might be fulfilled, which says, Let the wicked be wicked still, and the righteous be righteous still" (Rev. xxii. 11); and Christ is called "the true and faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead" (Rev. iii. 14; i. 5).³

In the writings of Irenæus (A.D. 180) there are numerous references to and citations from the Apocalypse. "John," he says, "the disciple of the Lord, when beholding the glorious advent of His kingdom, says in the Apocalypse, I turned to see the voice that spake with me, and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks."⁴ And again: "In a still clearer light has John, in the

¹ Κέχρηται μαρτυρίας ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰωάννου ἀποκαλύψεως. Eusebius, *Hist. Ecl.*, v. 18.

² *Idem*, iv. 24.

³ *Idem*, v. 1.

⁴ *Adv. Hær.*, iv. 20, 11.

Apocalypse, indicated to the Lord's disciples what shall happen in the last days, and concerning the ten kings which shall arise, among whom the empire which now rules the world will be partitioned."¹ And there is also the notable passage in which Irenæus discusses the number of the beast.² The testimony of Irenæus in favour of the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse is important, as Irenæus was the disciple of Polycarp, who was the disciple of John.

Clemens Alexandrinus (A.D. 190) writes: "And although here upon earth he (the true presbyter) be not honoured with the chief seat, he shall sit on one of the four-and-twenty thrones, judging the people, as John says in the Apocalypse."³

Tertullian (A.D. 200) says: "Now the Apostle John in the Apocalypse describes a sword which proceeded from the mouth of God as a sharp two-edged sword."⁴ "We have also John's foster churches. For although Marcion rejects the Apocalypse, the order of bishops, when traced up to their origin, will yet rest on John as their author."⁵ And again: "We acknowledge that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem let down from heaven. This Ezekiel had knowledge of, and the Apostle John beheld."⁶

Hippolytus (A.D. 220), a disciple of Irenæus, wrote "An Apology for the Apocalypse and the Gospel of John,

¹ *Adv. Her.*, v. 26, 1.

³ *Stromata*, vi. 13.

⁵ *Idem*, iv. 5.

² *Idem*, v. 30, 1.

⁴ *Contra Marcion*, iii. 14.

⁶ *Idem*, iii. 24.

the Apostle and Evangelist,"¹ and in his treatise on Christ and Antichrist he says, "Let us now see whether John has spoken to the same effect. For he sees, when in the isle Patmos, a revelation of awful mysteries, which he recounts freely and makes known to others."²

Origen (A.D. 230), although strongly opposed to Chiliasm, yet maintained the genuineness of the Apocalypse. "What shall we say of him who reclined on the breast of Jesus, I mean John? who has left one Gospel, in which he confesses that he could write so many that the whole world could not contain them. He also wrote the Apocalypse, commanded, as he was, to conceal and not to write the voices of the seven thunders."³ And again, "That you may understand that the omnipotence of the Father and the Son is one and the same, as God and the Lord are one and the same with the Father, listen to the manner in which John speaks of Christ in the Apocalypse: Thus saith the Lord God, which is and which was and which is to come, the Almighty."⁴

In early Christianity there were, however, certain opposing testimonies. The authenticity of the Apocalypse was disputed by certain heretical sects. The Marcionites called it in question on account of its supposed Jewish tendencies; and the Alogi, a rationalistic and anti-Montanist sect of the second century, ascribed it

¹ *Canon Paschal*. Jerome, among the writings of Hippolytus, mentions one on the Apocalypse; and on a marble monument of Hippolytus, dug up near Rome in 1551, a list of his writings is engraved, and one of them is on the Gospel of St. John and the Apocalypse. *Lardner's Works*, vol. i. p. 499.

² Hippolytus, *De Christo et Antichristo*, § 36.

³ Origen, *In Johan.*, tom. i. 14; Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, vi. 25.

⁴ Origen, *De Principiis*, i. 2, 10.

and all John's writings to Cerinthus.¹ No weight can be placed on the opinions of those heretics, as their objections arose from their peculiar dogmatic views.

In the writings of Caius of Rome (A.D. 211), preserved by Eusebius, we have the following statement:—"But Cerinthus too, through revelations written, as he would have us believe, by a great Apostle (δι' ἀποκαλύψεων ὡς ὑπὸ ἀποστόλου μεγάλου γεγραμμένων), lyingly asserts that marvellous revelations have been made to us through communications made to him by angels; alleging that after the resurrection the kingdom of Christ is to be on earth, and that men dwelling in Jerusalem are again to be subject to desires and pleasures. And being an enemy to the Divine Scriptures, with an intention to deceive, he said that there would be a space of a thousand years for celebrating nuptial festivals."² It is doubtful what is meant by "revelations written by a great Apostle." Some assert that there is here no reference to the Apocalypse;³ but the probability is that the Apocalypse is intended, especially as there is mention of the reign of the saints in Jerusalem, and a reference to the millennium.

But the chief objector is Dionysius of Alexandria (A.D. 250), the disciple of Origen and his successor in the catechetical school of Alexandria. In consequence of the extravagances of the Chiliasts, who derived their tenets from the Apocalypse, he called in question its Apostolic authorship. His opinion, expressed in a treatise entitled *περὶ ἐπαγγελίων*, was that the author was some other person of the name of John, not the Apostle. "That it

¹ Epiphanius, *Hær.*, 51.

² Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 28.

³ So Hug in his *Introduction to the New Testament*; Weiss' *Einleitung*, 10, 4; translation, vol. ii. p. 52, note.

is a John," he observes, "who wrote these things, we must believe, as he says it; but what John, it is uncertain. For he has not said that he was, as he often does in the Gospel, the beloved disciple of the Lord, neither the one leaning on His bosom, nor the brother of James, nor that he himself saw and heard what the Lord did and said. For certainly he would have said one of these particulars, if he wished to make himself clearly known."¹ The objection of Dionysius is chiefly founded on dogmatic considerations in opposition to the Chiliasts, supported indeed by internal criticism of the style and contents of the Apocalypse compared with the Gospel of John. To this latter objection we shall afterwards advert; but meanwhile we would only remark, with regard to the former, that his assertion comes too late, and rests on too subjective grounds to overthrow the external evidence in favour of the Johanneine authorship.

Eusebius, evidently sympathising with the remarks of Dionysius, and being strongly opposed to Chiliasm, speaks in several places of his history doubtfully of the authenticity of the Apocalypse. "The opinions respecting the Apocalypse," he observes, "are greatly divided. But we shall in due time give a judgment on this point from the testimony of the ancients."² In his catalogue of the books of the New Testament he says, "Moreover, if it should appear right, the Apocalypse of John, which some, as before said, reject, and others rank among the genuine" (ὁμολογουμένοις).³ And he leans to the opinion that the author was not John the Apostle, but John the Presbyter. "It is probable that the

¹ Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, vii. 25.

² *Idem*, iii. 24.

³ *Idem*, iii. 25.

second (the presbyter John), if it be not allowed that it was the first (the Apostle John), witnessed the Apocalypse, which is current under the name of John."¹

The omission of the Apocalypse in the Peshito, and probably also in the Philoxenian version, is considered as the strongest objection, showing that it was not recognised as a canonical book by the early Syrian Church. Some hold that the Peshito is only a revised edition of an original Syriac, which contained the Apocalypse and the other omitted books.² Weiss observes that the exclusion of the Apocalypse from the Peshito was not because it was rejected as a book which did not contain a genuine revelation, but because, on account of its obscurity, it was not considered edifying for reading in churches. With regard to the Philoxenian Syriac, it is still a matter of dispute whether it did or did not contain the Apocalypse.³

Such is the external evidence for and against the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse. The testimonies in favour are early, clear, and consecutive, whilst the contrary testimonies, with the exception of the omission of the Apocalypse in the Syriac versions, proceed from subjective considerations, or are due to doctrinal bias. So far as the external evidence goes, we may regard it as conclusive in favour of the Johannine

¹ Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39.

² See Hug's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. i. pp. 348-351, translation.

³ See Smith and Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. iv. p. 433 and p. 1020; Mangold's *Einleitung N. T. von Bleek*, p. 934; Dr. Rاندell in his admirable *Introduction to the Revelation in the Pulpit Commentary*, p. xv.; Scrivener's *Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 241, 1st edit.; p. 325, 3rd edit.

authorship. "Enough," observes Dr. Davidson, "has been given to show that the Apostolic origin of the Apocalypse is as well attested as that of any book in the New Testament. How can it be proved that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Galatians, for example, on the basis of external evidence, if it be denied that the Apostle John wrote the closing book of the canon? With the limited stock of early ecclesiastical literature that survives the wreck of time, we should despair of proving the authenticity of any New Testament book if that of the Apocalypse be rejected."¹ But if there be truth in this statement, it applies with equal force to the Fourth Gospel; for the testimonies of the Fathers in favour of these two books are nearly equal in value, whilst the Syriac version omits the Apocalypse, but contains the Gospel.²

The internal evidence is not so strong as the external, but it is not without weight. The author in four places expressly calls himself John. He introduces the Apocalypse by saying that God "sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John" (i. 1). He mentions himself in his address to the Asiatic Churches: "John to the seven Churches which are in Asia" (i. 4). He speaks of himself as "I, John" (i. 9); and at the close of the book he appeals to his testimony as that of an eye-witness: "I, John, am he that heard and saw these things" (xxii. 8). All these statements point to John,

¹ Davidson's *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, vol. i. pp. 318, 319, 1st edit.; vol. i. p. 345, 2nd edit. The same statement occurs in his article on the Revelation in Kitto's *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*.

² The theologians of the Tübingen school in general recognise the Johannean authorship of the Apocalypse, whilst they reject the Gospel.

the beloved disciple of the Lord. In conformity with his practice in his other writings (John xix. 35; 1 John i. 1), he declares himself to be an eye-witness "who bear witness of all things that he saw" (i. 2); and he assumes an apostolic authority over the Churches of Asia. "An unknown John," observes Hilgenfeld, "whose name has disappeared from history, leaving hardly any trace behind it, can scarcely have given commands in the name of Christ and the Spirit to the seven Churches."¹

To this it has been objected that the fact of John's naming himself is opposed to his authorship, as it is contrary to his practice in his other writings. Thus Dionysius observes: "John never speaks as of himself (in the first person), nor as of another (in the third), but he who wrote the Apocalypse declares himself immediately at the commencement."² But there is nothing in this objection. In calling himself John at the commencement of an apocalyptic book, he only follows the example of Daniel.³ Others affirm that the writer expressly excludes himself from the number of the Apostles. Thus the apostles and prophets are represented as already in a glorified condition: "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye saints, and ye apostles, and ye prophets" (Rev. xviii. 20). But these words are rhetorical, and are not to be strained; there is nothing in them opposed to their being the utterance of the apostolic seer. So also it is said that the New Jerusalem had twelve foundations, and on them twelve names of the twelve apostles of the

¹ Hilgenfeld's *Einleitung in das N. T.*, p. 448.

² Euseb., *Hist. Eccl.*, vii. 25.

³ "I, Daniel," Dan. vii. 15; x. 2, 7.

Lamb (Rev. xxi. 14); and it is argued that this would be contrary to the modesty of the Apostle, if he were the author of the book. But such an argument is frivolous. Paul, in his Epistles, makes similar assertions: he speaks of believers being built on the foundation of apostles and prophets, and of the revelation being made known unto the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit (Eph. ii. 20; iii. 5).

But the author of the Apocalypse must not only have been a person of great importance in the Apostolic Church, but in intimate relations with the Churches of Proconsular Asia. He is acquainted with their history, their necessities, their spiritual condition, their trials. And, as we have elsewhere seen, it is the testimony of the Fathers, without any reference to the Apocalypse, that the Apostle John spent his latter years at Ephesus, and was accustomed to visit the neighbouring Churches. And further, the author was in the island of Patmos when he received the revelations; and, as we have seen, the early Fathers inform us that John was banished to this island in the reign of Domitian. On this, however, we do not lay great stress, as the mention of Patmos in the Apocalypse may have given rise to the tradition of the Apostle's banishment to that island.¹

II.—OBJECTIONS TO ITS AUTHENTICITY.

As we have seen, in consequence chiefly of the Montanists and Chiliasts, who derived their opinions from the Apocalypse, there were early objections to this book

¹ See *supra*, p. 58.

from purely dogmatic reasons. It was, however, adopted in the fourth century as a canonical book by the Christian Church, and its authenticity was not again questioned until the time of the Reformation. Erasmus expressed his doubts as to its genuineness ; and Zuinglius refused to accept its authenticity in controversy. Luther attacked it in strong and vehement language. "There are many reasons," he observes, "why I regard this book as neither apostolical nor prophetic. First and chiefly, the Apostles do not make use of visions, but prophecy in clear and plain language, as do Peter, Paul, and Christ also in the Gospel. There is no prophet in the Old Testament, not to mention the New, who treats of visions throughout, so that the fourth Book of Esdras is almost equal to it in my estimation, and certainly I cannot perceive that it proceeded from the Holy Spirit. Let every man think of it as his spirit prompts him. My spirit cannot adapt itself to the book ; and it is reason enough for me why I should not esteem it very highly, that Christ is neither taught in it nor acknowledged, which above all things an Apostle is bound to do, for He says, 'Ye shall be my witness.'"¹ Certainly every one must see that such language is unwarranted and indefensible, for there are few books in the New Testament in which Christ is more acknowledged and exalted. In subsequent editions Luther modifies, though he does not retract, his views. Calvin received the Apocalypse as the work of the Apostle John, but he abstained from commenting on it on account of its mysterious character. Afterwards the Apocalypse was

¹ Preface to the first edition of his German New Testament, 1522.

generally received by the Church, until comparatively recent times, without any serious attacks being made on it.

The great objection against the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse is one of internal criticism. It is argued that the language and style, the character and spirit, and the system of doctrine of the Apocalypse are so entirely dissimilar to the Gospel and Catholic Epistles of John, that these works cannot have proceeded from the same author. Accordingly a great variety of opinions on this point exists. These may be classified as follows. Some (Eichhorn, Hug, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, Guericke, Hofmann, Luthardt, Dannemann, Godet, Alford, Elliot, Salmon, Simcox) suppose the dissimilarity is not so great, but that the Gospel, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse may all have been written by the same author, the Apostle John. Others, especially those belonging to the Tübingen school (Baur, Schwegler, Zeller, Köstlin, Hilgenfeld, Krenkel, Davidson) maintain that the Gospel and Epistle are by an unknown author, and the Apocalypse by John. Others (Schleiermacher, Lücke, Credner, Bleek, Ewald, De Wette, Neander, Düsterdieck) affirm the converse, that the Gospel and Epistle are by John, and the Apocalypse by some unknown author. And others (Keim, Volkmar, Scholten, Holtzmann, Pfeiderer, Hausrath, Hoekstra, Harnack, Weizäcker) reject both the Gospel and the Apocalypse.

Those who deny the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse vary in their opinions as to its author. We have seen that the early objectors, the Alogi, and possibly Caius, assigned it to the heretic Cerinthus;

an extravagant opinion not entertained by any in the present day. Hitzig¹ supposed that the author was John, surnamed Mark, to whom the Second Gospel is attributed, and in this opinion he is followed by Weisse, and partially by Hausrath and Spitta. The most common opinion is that suggested by Dionysius² and Eusebius, that the author is John the Presbyter: this has been adopted by Credner, De Wette, Bleek, Ewald, Mangold, and Düsterdieck. Others think that it was the production of an anonymous disciple of John. Renan thinks that it was written by one of the Apostle's disciples, and that it afterwards received his sanction and approval.³ Harnack supposes that it was written by an unknown Christian of Asia Minor, and that the name of John is a later interpolation, in order to ascribe the book to the Apostle John.⁴ Pfleiderer considers it "in the highest degree probable that the author of the Apocalypse was a Jewish Christian of Rome, who had come into Asia Minor, perhaps in his flight from the Neronian persecution, had made the acquaintance of the Churches there, and now, when the fall of Jerusalem was approaching, turned his prophetic eye both in that direction and also towards Rome, so that the burning recollection of the days of terror in Rome under Nero became in his mind the symbol of the coming judgment upon the proud and sinful Babylon."⁵ And Scholten and others assert that it is wholly spurious, the work of a forger,

¹ Hitzig, *Ueber Johannes Marcus und seine Schriften*.

² Dionysius only suggested another John; Eusebius named him more specifically John the Presbyter. See Holtzmann's *Einleitung*, p. 410.

³ Renan's *L'Antichrist*, Introduction, p. xli. (Translation, p. xvi.).

⁴ Article on the Revelation in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

⁵ Pfleiderer's *Hibbert Lectures* for 1885, p. 154.

like those Apocalyptic writings then current, such as the Book of Enoch, the Apocalypse of Baruch, and the Assumption of Moses.

Baur, Pfeiderer, Keim, Renan, and Volkmar suppose that there is a strong anti-Pauline element in the Apocalypse. Baur, whilst he admits the authorship of John, asserts that the Apocalypse was written expressly against Paul. "There can be little doubt," he observes, "that the writer had the Apostle Paul himself before his eye as the originator of the doctrine out of which a spurious Christianity had sprung." Paul, according to Baur, is alluded to when the writer speaks of those who say that they are apostles and are not, but have been found to be liars.¹ The same opinion is maintained by Pfeiderer,² and is expressed in the most unwarranted and offensive terms by Renan.³ According to Volkmar, the Apocalypse was designedly written as a protest against Paul by a writer who sheltered himself under the name of John. Paul is referred to when the writer mentions those who held the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication (ii. 14). He gravely asserts that Paul or Paulinism is meant by the second wild beast, whom he identifies with the false prophet.⁴ We almost feel that

¹ Baur's *Die christliche Kirche*, vol. i. p. 81 ff.; translation, vol. i. p. 85 ff.

² Pfeiderer's *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 156.

³ "John the Apostle," he observes, "appears to have been, after James, the most ardent of the Judæo-Christians; the Apocalypse, on its side, breathes out a terrible hatred against Paul, and against those who were relaxed in their observance of the Jewish law."—*L'Antichrist*, Introduction, p. xiii. translation.

⁴ Volkmar, *Offenbarung Johannes*, pp. 205-208.

we owe an apology for mentioning a theory so extravagant and so unsupported by evidence.

During recent years a theory suggested by older writers has been revived, namely, that the Apocalypse is a compilation of several documents written by several authors, and put together by an editor or redactor;¹ but there is a difference of opinion as regards both the number and the nature of these documents. Völter supposes that the original Apocalypse with supplement was written by the Apostle John, but that it underwent three revisions, and received three series of interpolations, ascribed to the times of Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus Pius.² Vischer considers the groundwork to be not of Christian, but of Jewish origin, and that it was translated by an unknown Christian from the original Hebrew into Greek, with several additions and adaptations to Christianity.³ Spitta supposes that it was composed of three or four documents; a Christian original Apocalypse, written about A.D. 60, probably by John Mark; a Jewish Apocalypse, written when Caligula attempted to introduce his statue into the Temple; a second Jewish Apocalypse, written when Pompey conquered Judæa; and the additions of the redactor interspersed throughout the work, written in the reign of Trajan: the vision of the seals belonged to the Christian Apocalypse, the vision of the trumpets to the first Jewish Apocalypse, and the vision of the vials to the

¹ This view of the composite nature of the Apocalypse appears first to have been advanced by Vogel, *Commentationes VII. de Apoc. Joan.*, 1811-1816.

² Völter, *Die Entstehung der Apokalypse*, 1882, 2nd edit., 1885.

³ Vischer's views were published with the sanction of Harnack, which gives to them their importance.

second Jewish Apocalypse.¹ Weyland, a Dutch theologian, supposes that the Apocalypse was composed of two Jewish Apocalypses, the one written after the defeat of Cestius Gallus, and the other after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, afterwards fused and interpolated by a Christian redactor in the reign of Trajan. Dr. Simcox suggests that chapter xvii. might be a vision really seen by John, or some one else in Nero's time, and incorporated by him, or by a contemporary, or later editor, in the Revelation. He supposes that one part of the Apocalypse was written in the time of Nero, and another part in the time of Domitian, and that this will account for "the conflict between external and internal evidence as to date."² Weizäcker considers the Apocalypse to be composed at different times, partly in the reign of Galba or Vespasian and partly in the reign of Hadrian, and the different parts to be united by a redactor.³

We now proceed to consider in detail the chief objections which have been brought against the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse, or rather against the opinion that John was the author both of the Fourth Gospel and of the Apocalypse.

1. The main objection arises from the dissimilarity in the language and style of the Apocalypse to that of John's

¹ Spitta, *Die Offenbarung des Johannes untersucht von Friedrich Spitta*, published in 1889. See review of this work in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, by Weizäcker, for 20th September 1890.

² Article entitled "The New Theory of the Apocalypse," in the *Expositor* for 1887, third series, vol. v. p. 442. In his Commentary, recently published, however, he maintains the unity of the Apocalypse, and asserts that it was written shortly after the death of Nero.

³ Weizäcker's *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, 1890, pp. 506-510.

Gospel and the Catholic Epistles. This objection was adduced by Dionysius of Alexandria, who had the sagacity to remark the dissimilarity between those writings. "We may," he observes, "notice how the phraseology of the Gospel and the Epistle differs from the Apocalypse. For the former are written not only irreprehensibly as regards the Greek language, but are most elegant in diction, in the arguments, and the whole structure of the style. . . . But I perceive that the dialect and language (of the writer of the Apocalypse) is not very accurate Greek, but that he uses barbarous idioms, and in some places solecisms which it is now unnecessary to select."¹ It is argued that the Greek of the Apocalypse is more faulty and less pure than that of the Gospel; that many of the favourite words and phrases, peculiar to the other writings ascribed to John, are either wanting in the Apocalypse or are very rare; that, conversely, many of the favourite expressions of the Apocalypse are not to be found in the Gospel and in the Epistle; and that the style of the Gospel is abstract and calm, while that of the Apocalypse is pictorial and impassioned. Lists of these dissimilarities are given in the various commentaries on the writings of John;² and the inference is drawn by many distinguished theologians of all classes of opinion that they are sufficient to prove a difference of authorship. In the well-known language of De Wette, so often quoted: "From all this it follows that

¹ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, vii. 25.

² Credner's *Einleitung*, pp. 729-732; Davidson's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. iii. pp. 562-571; De Wette, *Einleitung in das N. T.*, pp. 418, 419; Lee's Commentary on the Apocalypse in *Speaker's Commentary*, vol. iv. pp. 450-460; Reynold's Introduction to Commentary on John's Gospel in *Pulpit Commentary*, p. 75.

no conclusion of modern criticism is so firmly established as this, that if the Apostle John wrote the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles, he did not write the Apocalypse; or that if the Apocalypse is his work, he is not the author of the other writings."¹

Now, it is at once admitted that such a dissimilarity of language and style does exist, although not to the extent which some writers affirm. The Greek of the Gospel and the Epistles, though by no means faultless, is much purer and less Hebraistic than that of the Apocalypse, and the form and subject-matter of those writings are entirely different. Many of the misconstructions are evidently intentional;² for example, in the sentence, ἀπὸ ὃ ὦν καὶ ὃ ἦν καὶ ὃ ἐρχόμενος (i. 4), it does not follow that the author did not know that the proposition ἀπὸ governed the genitive, and that ἦν was not a participle, but he puts the words in the nominative, because the clause is regarded as a proper name, being the translation of Jehovah.

Various causes have been assigned to account for this dissimilarity in language and style. Some account for the difference, as regards the purity of the Greek, by affirming that a considerable time elapsed between these writings; that the Apocalypse was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 68, and the Gospel more than twenty years after, about A.D. 88, and that in the interval John acquired a better knowledge of the Greek language.

¹ De Wette's *Einleitung in das N. T.*, p. 422, and in the English translation, p. 378. De Wette compares the difference between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse to the difference between Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

² For an exhaustive list of solecisms or deviations from the ordinary rules of Greek grammar, see the Rev. T. Randall's Introduction to Commentary on Revelation in *Pulpit Commentary*, pp. xxiii.-xxvi.

“John,” observes Dannemann, “as long as he lived in Palestine, used chiefly the Jewish language, so that his knowledge of Greek must have been developed from the time that he settled in Greek countries. If John wrote a book in the year 68, when the Apocalypse was composed, it would be more Hebraistic than his Gospel and First Epistle, which were not written until after the year 80.”¹ So also Bishop Lightfoot remarks: “A lapse of more than thirty years spent in the midst of a Gentile population will explain the contrast of language and imagery between the Apocalypse and the later writings of John, due allowance being made for the difference of subject.”² Now, provided the difference of time between the composition of the Apocalypse and that of the Gospel be admitted, there is great force in this answer to the objection. John could not be so well acquainted with the Greek language when he wrote the Apocalypse as he afterwards became when he wrote the Gospel. The answer of Bleek to this, that John must have been well advanced in years when he wrote the Apocalypse, and that it is scarcely likely that his whole Greek style should have changed its character so essentially as it must have done if he, the author of the Gospel and Epistles, was also the author of the Apocalypse,³ is without force, because the environment of John was entirely changed. Up to the time when he wrote the Apocalypse he spoke chiefly Hebrew, afterwards he spoke chiefly Greek.

¹ Dannemann, *Wer ist der Verfasser der Offenbarung Johannes?* a work of great critical insight.

² Lightfoot on the *Epistle to the Galatians*, p. 346; see also Simcox on the *Revelation of St. John*, Introduction, pp. 30-32.

³ Bleek's *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, p. 127.

Formerly he lived almost entirely in Palestine, afterwards he lived in the Greek city of Ephesus.¹ It is also affirmed that the anomalies in the Apocalypse could not have arisen from any defective knowledge of Greek, because throughout the work the author shows himself to have ample command of the resources of that language. This to a certain extent is true; and we shall be able to account, from other considerations, for the Hebraistic character of the Apocalypse. But where this reason does not hold good, the above explanation may account for linguistic anomalies. Of course, if a lapse of a considerable time between the composition of the Apocalypse and the Gospel be not admitted, if both be considered as works of the later years of John, the above argument is deprived of its force.²

Another cause of dissimilarity of style is the difference in the subject-matter and character of the works. A change in the nature of a work creates a corresponding change of style. An author who writes a history employs a different style in writing a poem or a philosophical dissertation. The Apocalypse is a prophecy, the prevision of the future; the Gospel is a history, the recollection of the past. The Apocalypse is, as regards its form, a series of visions communicated to the Apostle; the Gospel is chiefly a record of the

¹ "There would," observes Professor Salmon, "have been fair ground for suspicion if there had been no superiority over the Greek of the Apocalypse in a book written after a score of years, during which the author was speaking little or no Aramaic, and must have been habitually speaking Greek."—*Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 386.

² Those who hold that the Apocalypse was composed in the reign of Domitian cannot have recourse to the above argument; and so far the evidence in favour of the identity of authorship is weakened.

discourses of the Lord with His familiar disciples. In the one the imagination is elevated; in the other the memory is exercised. The spirit in which these works were written is very different. In writing the Apocalypse, the author was in a state of ecstasy; he was, like Paul, caught up to the third heavens; a prophetic fire burned within him; visions and revelations from God were imparted to him; his enthusiasm was kindled. In writing the Gospel and the Epistle, on the other hand, the author was calm and collected; the inspiration imparted to him, although of a most elevating nature, was not ecstatic; he wrote in full self-consciousness. As Guericke well expresses it, the Gospel of John was conceived and written, ἐν τῷ νοῷ, in the understanding; the Apocalypse, on the other hand, ἐν τῷ πνεύματι, in the spirit.¹

The strong Hebraistic character of the Apocalypse may in a great measure be accounted for by its being written after the model of, and in conformity to the Old Testament Prophecies. There is a strong resemblance between it and the Apocalyptic prophets, especially Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah.² The references to these books and the imitations of them are numerous. There is the same attention to mystic numbers, the same prophetic symbols of horsemen, vials, living creatures or cherubims, lamps, horns, and beasts. Illustrations from the Old Testament history pervade the whole book; the doctrine of Balaam, the whoredoms of Jezebel, the great river Euphrates, the great city Baby-

¹ Guericke, *Neutestamentliche Isagogik*, p. 534.

² To this subject we refer in a special Dissertation.

lon, Gog and Magog, Sodom and Egypt, are examples which colour the Apocalypse. It is perhaps the most Hebrew book of the New Testament. The result is that a strong Hebraistic colouring is given to its style and diction. On the other hand, the Gospel is wholly pervaded with the spirit of the New Testament, and although there is internal evidence that it was the work of a Jewish Christian, yet there is a comparative want of Hebraisms. The Hebraisms of the Apocalypse were in a great measure intentional, and arose from its designed conformity to the prophecies of the Old Testament.¹

But although there are dissimilarities between the Apocalypse and John's Gospel and Epistles—dissimilarities which may at least be partially accounted for—there are also striking similarities, which go to prove identity of authorship, or at least to weaken the force of the objection drawn from the dissimilarities. One important link connecting these writings is the application of the term *Logos* to Jesus Christ. This term is undoubtedly Johannine; it is not elsewhere employed in Scripture, and yet it occurs in the Apocalypse: "He is arrayed in a garment sprinkled with blood; and His name is called the Word of God" (ὁ Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ) (Rev. xix. 13). So also the word "the Lamb," as denoting not merely the emblem or symbol of Christ, but Christ Himself, is peculiar to John; as when in the Gospel it is said, "Behold the Lamb of God," and in the Apocalypse, "I saw in the midst of the throne and

¹ See Godet's *Commentary on John's Gospel*, vol. i. pp. 244, 245, English translation.

of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing as though it had been slain" (Rev. v. 6). It is true that the Greek word is different, ὁ ἀμνός being used in the Gospel and τὸ ἀρνίον in the Apocalypse; but the idea that Jesus Christ is the Lamb is common to both. The word ἀληθίνος, "that which is true," is used ten times in the Apocalypse, nine times in the Fourth Gospel, four times in the Epistle, and only once in the Pauline Epistles. So also "he that overcometh" (ὁ νικῶν), a favourite expression in the Epistle, is of frequent occurrence in the Apocalypse, as in the conclusion of the Epistles to the Seven Churches and elsewhere throughout the work: "He that overcometh shall inherit all things" (Rev. xxi. 7). The verb σκηνώω, "to tabernacle," only found in the Johannine writings, is used in the Gospel, with evident reference to the Shekinah, of the Logos tabernacling among men (John i. 14), and is four times employed in the Apocalypse with reference to God: "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell (tabernacle) with them" (Rev. xxi. 3). The prophecy of Zechariah concerning the piercing of the Messiah is quoted both in the Gospel and in the Apocalypse, with this remarkable peculiarity, that the verb employed is the same in both, ἐξεκέντησαν, and differs from the verb used in the Septuagint.¹

¹ Compare Rev. i. 7 with John xix. 37 and Zech. xii. 10. See Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iv., Prolegomena, pp. 226-229; Davidson's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. iii. pp. 552-559; Dannemann's *Offenbarung Johannes*, pp. 31-35; Salmon's *Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 277-282; Milligan's *Baird Lectures*, pp. 270-273; Vincent's *Word Studies in the New Testament: the Apocalypse*. But especially the reader is referred to the work by the Rev. Howard Evans, entitled *St. John the Author of the*

2. It has also been objected that not only are the language and style of the Fourth Gospel and of the Apocalypse entirely different, but the spirit which pervades them is wholly dissimilar. The Fourth Gospel and the Epistle are pervaded with the spirit of love; whereas the Apocalypse is stern throughout, almost vindictive, and full of denunciations against the enemies of Christ. "A Jewish spirit of revenge," observes Volkmar, "breathes throughout the whole Apocalypse, invoking thunder, hail, and pestilence on Rome. The great wine-press of the wrath of God shall be trodden down, so that blood flows for forty miles up to the horses' bridles; and as often as a vial of wrath is poured out, the voice of jubilee sounds."¹

Certainly such a difference must be admitted, but this difference does not necessitate a difference of authorship. We have had frequent occasion to remark that John's character possessed these two characteristics, a spirit of love and a spirit of hatred to evil, and that the more ardent the Apostle's love to Christ, the greater is his hatred to Antichrist. John was at once the beloved

Fourth Gospel. There he gives numerous lists of similarities of expression between the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse, showing that the fundamental doctrines of the two works are identical; that the imagery is to a considerable extent the same; that the root-ideas are identical, and that the phraseology and style are in many points identical. In an Appendix he gives a long list of phrases, identical or similar, occurring in these works. pp. 118-132. "Besides," he observes, "at least 100 words common to the two writings, there are from 150 to 200 identical or similar phrases or combinations of words which occur in the Apocalypse and Fourth Gospel. Many of these are characteristic expressions not to be found elsewhere throughout the whole of the New Testament" (pp. 76, 77).

¹ Volkmar's *Offenbarung Johannes*, p. 26. The same objection is also urged by Düsterdieck, but in more moderate terms, *Handbuch über die Offenbarung Johannes*, p. 73.

disciple who leant upon the bosom of the Saviour, and the Son of Thunder, who wished to call down fire from heaven upon those who rejected Him. Besides, the subject-matter of these writings is entirely different. The Gospel treats of the love of God—Christ appears as the Saviour of the world ; whilst the Apocalypse treats of the justice of God—Christ appears as the Judge of the world. It must also be remembered that the Apocalypse is imbued with the spirit of the ancient prophets, and therefore exhibits all the severity of the prophetic language ; it is full of denunciations against the enemies of Christ and His people. But although the idea of retribution predominates in the Apocalypse, yet the spirit of love is not wanting ; the justice of God is united with His mercy. The mercy of God pervades the Epistles to the Seven Churches : “ As many as I love I rebuke and chasten ; ” and especially does the love of God shine forth in the rewards to be bestowed on all His faithful people, when He shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and when God Himself shall be with them and be their God. Although in the Apocalypse Christ is represented as seated on the throne of judgment, yet the rainbow of mercy encircles that throne (Rev. iv. 3).

3. It has also been affirmed that the doctrine taught in the Apocalypse is different from that taught in the Johannine Gospel and Epistles. “ Thus in eschatology the Apocalypse has a first and second resurrection. In like manner the idea of Antichrist differs in the Apocalypse and First Epistle of John. The Antichrist of the former is a notable instrument of Satan, but the Antichrist of the latter is a concentration of many Antichrists, one

who destroys Christianity from within by corrupting its fundamental faith.”¹

This objection is, however, not much insisted upon.² The Apocalypse treats chiefly of eschatological points, and therefore there is in this department a much fuller development than in the Gospel and the Epistle; but there is no contrariety between them. Antichrist is represented in the Epistle as one (ὁ ἀντίχριστος), and the many Antichrists (ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ) are his precursors (1 John ii. 18). In all the writings ascribed to John, God is represented as the Living One, the source of all life. Christ is in the Apocalypse as well as in the Gospel a supernatural being, as the First and the Last, the Holy and the True, the object of religious worship, and the Word of God. His death is an atonement for sins; He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; He has redeemed us unto God with His blood; He has washed believers and made them white in His blood. The world is represented in the Epistle as the enemy of God; and in the Apocalypse “all the world worships the beast” answers to the declaration in the Epistle “the whole world lieth in wickedness.” There is also in the Apocalypse the same contrast between Christ and Satan, truth and falsehood, light and darkness, love and hate, the world and the Church, which meets us in the Gospel and in the Epistle. Indeed, the Apocalypse may be considered as the closing act of the drama of this

¹ Article on the Revelation by Dr. S. Davidson in Kitto's *Encyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, vol. iii. p. 666.

² Even Köstlin observes: “It is confirmed from all quarters that John's system of doctrine is in great part a spiritualisation of that of the Apocalypse.”—*Johannischer Lehrbegriff*, p. 4.

mighty conflict which has been carried on from the fall of man, which was seen in Christ's contests with evil, which still rages on earth, and which shall finally terminate in Christ's great victory over Satan and all the powers of darkness—a conflict which is prominently brought forward in the Gospel and the Epistle.¹

We have thus examined the objections arising from the dissimilarities of style and language, and the differences of spirit and doctrine between the Apocalypse and the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles; and although we admit these dissimilarities and differences, yet we do not think that they are of so strong or decided a character as to necessitate us affirming a diversity of authorship. The difference in doctrine is slight, and is fairly accounted for by the apocalyptic nature of the Revelation. The difference in spirit is more manifest, but is also accounted for by considering the subject-matter of the writings. The differences in language and style are still greater, but are lessened by considering the different circumstances under which these works were written, and the necessary influence of his Old Testament models on the author of the Apocalypse, and are to a considerable extent counterbalanced by undoubted and peculiar similarities. We do not, then, consider these differences to be of such a nature as to overthrow those strong and convincing testimonies, which assert that the Apostle John was the author of

¹ On the identity of the doctrine of the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse, see Luthardt, *John the Author of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 260–274, and especially Gebhardt, *The Doctrine of the Apocalypse*, pp. 304–411, English translation, T. & T. Clark; Lechler's *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, pp. 228–232, 2nd edit.; English translation, vol. ii. pp. 207–217.

the Apocalypse. The assumption that John was the author of the Fourth Gospel and of the Epistles which bear his name does not contradict the assertion that the visions of the Apocalypse were also imparted to him.

III.—TO WHOM ADDRESSED.

The Apocalypse is addressed to the Seven Churches of Asia: "What thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven Churches; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamum, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea" (Rev. i. 11). This group of Churches were all in proximity to each other, and, though the words *ταῖς ἐν Ἀσίᾳ* of the *textus receptus* are not genuine, belonged to the province of Asia (Rev. i. 4). By Asia is meant not the continent of Asia, but the comparatively small country of Proconsular Asia, nearly equivalent to the ancient kingdom of Pergamum, which was gifted to the Roman republic by its last monarch, Attalus Philadelphus. It comprised the ancient districts of Lydia, Caria, Mysia, and part of Phrygia, and possessed many large and flourishing cities. John, being resident for many years in Ephesus, had easy access to the Churches of Asia, and, as we learn from Eusebius,¹ exercised an episcopal superintendence over them. Only seven Churches are named, but we know that other Churches existed in that populous region; in all probability Christianity had gained an extensive footing in all the large cities of the district. We learn from the Epistles of Paul that

¹ *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 29.

there were Churches in Colossæ and Hierapolis (Col. iv. 13); we know from the Acts of the Apostles that flourishing Churches were planted at Miletus and Alexandria Troas (Acts xvi. 8, xx. 5; 2 Cor. ii. 12); and from the Epistles of Ignatius we may fairly assume that there were at that time Churches in Tralles and Magnesia. Only seven churches are named, probably to preserve the symmetry of the work, as the number seven pervades the whole book. The Seven Churches are representative; what was addressed to each was addressed to all; the same exhortations and encouragements are applicable to the Christian Church at large, though preserving the characteristics of each particular Church. "What John addresses to one Church," observes Victorinus, "he addresses to all. Paul has first taught us that there are seven Churches (alluding to the seven Churches to which his Epistles are addressed), and that the seven Churches named mean the Church Catholic; and so John, that he might observe the same method, did not exceed the number seven."¹

The first mentioned of the Seven Churches is Ephesus, the illustrious capital of Proconsular Asia, celebrated for its magnificent buildings, its temple of Diana, its theatre, its circus, styled by Pliny the "Light of Asia," then in all its glory, but now a miserable village called Ayasalook.² Smyrna, a city of Ionia, has

¹ *In Apocal.*, chap. i. "By the seven," observes St. Augustine, "is signified the perfection of the Universal Church, and by writing to seven, he shows the fulness of the one." The symbolical value of the number is probably to be sought for in the seven days of creation.

² See *Discoveries at Ephesus*, by J. T. Wood, 1877, containing an interesting account of the excavations carried on from 1863-74 at a cost of

for more than two thousand years been an important commercial seaport; it is at present one of the most flourishing cities in the Levant, containing a population of 200,000, many of whom are Christians. Pergamum or Pergamos, formerly the capital of the kingdom of the same name, was celebrated for its school of grammarians, its magnificent library of 200,000 volumes,¹ and its famous temple of Æsculapius; it is still a considerable city, called Bergamah, with 20,000 inhabitants, of whom 3000 are Christians. Thyatira, a city of Lydia, famous in ancient times for its purple dyes,² and still noted for the same commerce, exporting large quantities of scarlet cloth, has a population of 18,000, about a third of whom are Christians. Its modern name is Akhissar. Sardis, once the proud capital of Lydia, the royal city of Cræsus, is now reduced to a small village, known by the name of Sart. Philadelphia, also a city of Lydia, having received its name from its founder, Attalus Philadelphus, is still a considerable town, known by the name of Allahsher, and possesses five Christian churches. Laodicea, a city of Phrygia, on a tributary of the Menander, was destroyed by an earthquake in the reign of Nero, but rebuilt with great splendour, and was evidently at the time when the Apocalypse was written in a state of worldly prosperity. Of all the seven Asiatic Churches, it is the most ruinous; its lukewarmness has proved its

£16,000 by the Trustees of the British Museum, and which resulted in the discovery of the site and imposing remains of the great temple of Diana.

¹ Removed to Alexandria by Mark Antony as a gift to Cleopatra, and destroyed under the Caliph Omar.

² Lydia, a seller of purple, was a native of Thyatira (Acts xvi. 14).

destruction. "Nothing," says Hamilton, "can exceed the desolation and melancholy appearance of the site of Laodicea."¹

From the Epistles addressed to these Seven Churches we learn something of their condition when the Apocalypse was written. There is a symmetry in these Epistles; the Churches are first blamed for what evil is in them, then commended for their good points, and a promise is given to those who continue faithful. There is a considerable difference among them: the Churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia are entirely commended—no faults are attributed to them; whereas the Church of Laodicea is wholly blamed—no words of praise are bestowed upon it. The other four Churches of Ephesus, Sardis, Pergamum, and Thyatira, are partly commended and partly blamed. These Churches had evidently existed for some time; they had gone through a stage of experience. Several of them had degenerated; they had left their first love and their early zeal had cooled. The Churches were persecuted; some of them were tried and had tribulation; and in the Church of Pergamum, where Satan's seat is, in allusion perhaps to the worship of Æsculapius, whose emblem was the serpent, mention is made of Antipas, who had suffered martyrdom (Rev. ii. 13). Heresies had arisen in these Churches; certain forms of Gnosticism had made their appearance. In most of the Epistles reference is made to internal corruptions; in the Epistles to Ephesus and

¹ For further particulars on the Seven Churches see Winer's *Biblisches Realwörterbuch*; Smith's *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography*; Schaff's *Bible Dictionary*; Hamilton's *Seven Churches of Asia*; and Fellow's *Journal written in Asia Minor*.

Pergamum special mention is made of the Nicolaitanes; in the Epistle to Pergamum of those who held the doctrine of Balaam; and in the Epistle to Thyatira of the woman Jezebel, who called herself a prophetess and who seduced the servants of Christ.

IV.—TIME AND PLACE OF WRITING.

The date of the composition of the Apocalypse is a subject of much discussion. The fact that the external evidence is in favour of one date, and the internal evidence in favour of another, makes it a matter of such difficulty, that nothing positive can be determined. There are two opinions, opposed to each other; the one, that the Apocalypse was composed shortly after the death of Nero, in the reign of Galba or Vespasian, A.D. 69 or 70; and the other, that it was composed at the close of Domitian's reign, A.D. 96. A space of twenty-six years intervenes between these dates.

The most prevalent opinion among theologians and biblical critics in the present day is that the Apocalypse was composed shortly after the death of Nero. The most learned modern critics, belonging to different schools of religious thought, with few exceptions, have embraced this opinion.¹ Different reasons have been assigned; those of one class of theologians have been repudiated by another; and though they all reach the same conclusion, they do so by different roads.

¹ This opinion is adopted by Wetstein, Michaelis, Credner, Lücke, Baur, De Wette, Neander, Ewald, Guericke, Bleek, Moses Stuart, Gerhardt, Auberlen, Düsterdieck, Renan, Reuss, Immer, Weiss, Mangold, Holtzmann, Samuel Davidson, Farrar, Westcott, Lightfoot, Stier, Salmon, Simcox, Boyd Carpenter, &c., &c.

The external evidence in favour of this view is acknowledged by all to be weak; indeed it is scarcely worth mentioning. There is not the slightest trace of it in the writings of the Fathers. The earliest direct statement to this effect is a subscription attached to a manuscript of a Syrian version of the sixth century, published in Walton's Polyglot, that John was banished to Patmos by Nero Cæsar.¹ This date is also mentioned by Theophylact, who, however, did not live until the eleventh century, and who also contradicts himself by assigning the condemnation of John to Trajan. The above opinion then rests wholly on internal evidence.

It is urged by some theologians (Lücke, Bleek, Mangold, Holtzmann, Düsterdieck, Moses Stuart) that there is internal evidence in the book itself that it was written whilst the Temple of Jerusalem was still standing. This opinion is founded on the following statements in the Apocalypse: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod; and one said, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. And the court which is without the temple leave without, and measure it not; for it hath been given unto the nations; and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months" (Rev. xi. 1, 2). The dead bodies of the two witnesses were to lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified (Rev. xi. 8); and

¹ According to Tertullian (*De Præscript. Hæc.*, xxxvi.), John was sent into banishment from Rome; and as he mentions this along with the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, it might be held that in Tertullian's opinion the banishment occurred under Nero; but the inference is too precarious.

mention is made of the beloved city (Rev. xx. 9). From these statements it is argued that the Jewish war was then in progress, and that although the city might be destroyed, yet the Temple would be preserved; God would watch over and save His holy house.¹ But these expressions do not necessarily presuppose the existence of the Temple of Jerusalem. The passage is symbolical, and the Temple here is typical of the Christian Church. The measuring of the Temple of God and the altar is, no doubt, for their preservation, but, being symbolical, it does not necessarily imply that they were then standing. Ezekiel in his visions was similarly commanded to measure the Temple after its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar. Besides, if the literal interpretation be correct, if the author expected the capture of the fore-court, but not of the Temple, the event falsified the prediction, and thus proved that the Apocalypse was no true prophecy.

But the chief argument for this early date is the supposed designation of time in the account of the seven heads of the beast, by which, according to many of the advocates of this opinion, seven Roman emperors are indicated. "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth: and they are seven kings; the five are fallen, the one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue yet a little while. And the beast that was, and is not, is himself also an eighth, and is of the seven, and he goeth into perdition" (Rev. xvii. 9-11). It is here stated that five of these kings are fallen (*οἱ πέντε ἔπεσαν*), that one is (*ὁ εἷς*

¹ Düsterdieck's *Offenbarung Johannis*, pp. 54, 55.

ἐστίν), that the seventh is not yet come (ὁ ἄλλος οὐπω ἦλθε); and to these is added an eighth, who is also of the seven (αὐτὸς ὄγδοός ἐστιν, καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἐπτά ἐστιν). From this it is argued that the Apocalypse was written in the reign of the sixth Roman emperor; and that, therefore, if we could discover who he is, we could fix on the precise time when it was composed. As to the identity of this emperor, however, there is among these interpreters a considerable difference of opinion. Some begin the list with Julius Cæsar, so that, according to them, Nero is the sixth emperor.¹ Others omit the three emperors Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, whose united reign extended hardly over a year, and who might be regarded as military usurpers, so that, according to them, Vespasian is the sixth emperor.² But according to the general opinion of these critics, the five emperors who are fallen are Augustus, Tiberius, Caius Caligula, Claudius, and Nero; the sixth who now is, is Galba, the reigning emperor; and the seventh, who is not yet come, is Otho, his successor, as Galba's reign was expected to be of short duration on account of his extreme age.³ The eighth emperor, "the beast who was and is not, and is of the seven," is supposed to be Nero, whose death was not credited, and who was expected to reappear in the East, and to regain his throne by the assistance of the Parthians. This opinion that Nero was not dead was current in the Roman Empire, and several impostors arose who personated that emperor. Tacitus tells us that the Parthians were well nigh induced to take arms by the tricks

¹ So Wetstein, Stuart, Bertholdt, Renan.

² So Lücke, Bleek, Düsterdieck, Simcox.

³ So Ewald, De Wette, Baur, Reuss, Hilgenfeld.

of a pretended Nero ;¹ and he mentions a false Nero, a slave from Pontus, in the reign of Galba, who arrived at the island of Cythnus, and, after having caused great disturbance, was put to death by the Romans. "About this time," he observes, "a report that Nero was still alive, and on his way to the East, excited a false alarm through Achæa and Asia."² And Suetonius informs us that in the reign of Domitian an impostor gave himself out for Nero, and that name secured for him such a favourable reception among the Parthians, that it was with difficulty they were prevailed upon to give him up.³ Mention is made in history of three impostors who personated Nero ; one in Achæa and Proconsular Asia, in the reign of Galba ; a second, also in Proconsular Asia, in the reign of Titus ; and a third, protected by the Parthians, in the reign of Domitian.⁴ In the fifth Sybilline book, supposed to be written in the time of Hadrian, the Antichrist Beliar is identified with Nero ;⁵ and toward the close of the third century, Victorinus, in his exposition of the Apocalypse, identifies the beast rising out of the sea with Nero : "Now that one of the heads was wounded as it were unto death, in this he speaks of Nero."⁶ It is affirmed that John, or the author of the Apocalypse, adopts this legend of Nero, and supposes that Antichrist, the eighth head, and who also belonged

¹ *Hist.*, i. 2.² *Hist.*, ii. 8.³ *Suet. Nero*, 57.⁴ *Merrivale's History of the Romans under the Empire*, vol. vii. p. 50. Perhaps the second and third pretender was the same person.⁵ On the Sybilline Oracles and their probable age, see Drummond's *Jewish Messiah*, pp. 10-16 ; Reuss in Herzog's *Real-Encyclopædie*.⁶ *In Apos.*, chap. xiii. He gives the seven kings as follows : the five who are fallen are Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, and Titus ; the sixth, under whom the Apocalypse was written, is Domitian ; and the seventh, who is yet to come, is Nerva ; and the eighth, Antichrist or Nero.

to the seven emperors, was Nero revived from the dead. They suppose that the whole Apocalypse is founded on this legend, and that the kings of the East (Rev. xvi. 12) are the Parthians, who were to assist Nero in regaining his throne. Others, among these critics (Düsterdieck, &c.), deny that Nero is Antichrist.¹ They suppose that Nero reappeared not in person, but in spirit, in the eighth emperor, Domitian. This emperor was actuated by the same spirit: he also was a violent persecutor of the Christians, and was regarded not only by the Christians, but by the Romans, as another Nero.²

Now certainly much ingenuity has been here displayed, and there is, it is admitted, a plausibility about this interpretation of the seven kings, and of the eighth who was and is not, and is of the seven; but, in reality, it rests on no foundation. It is a mere gratuitous assumption to suppose that by the seven kings are denoted seven Roman emperors. The term kings may have reference, as in the Book of Daniel (Dan. vii. 17, 23), to which the Apocalypse is assimilated, not to persons, but to kingdoms or powers. To apply the legend of the reappearance of Nero in the East to be restored to his throne by the aid of the Parthians as the eighth king, is an anachronism, for this legend did not arise until the reign of Domitian, when that pseudo-Nero appeared. A false Nero indeed appeared in the reign of Galba, but he was quickly slain, and had no connection with Parthia. It

¹ Düsterdieck, *Offenbarung*, p. 57 and p. 526.

² Eusebius observes that Domitian established himself as the successor of Nero in his hatred and hostility to God. *Ecl. Hist.*, iii. 17. Juvenal speaks of Domitian as "the bald Nero." *Sat.* iv. 34, 35.

was not until twenty years later that another suppositious Nero appeared in Parthia, and secured the assistance of the Parthians. Besides, this interpretation would make the Apocalypse to be based on a mere legend, and thus degrade the book from being an inspired prediction to be a worthless production, founded on error and falsehood.

It is further argued that the number of the beast points to Nero as Antichrist. "He that hath understanding, let him count the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred sixty and six" (Rev. xiii. 18). This mystical number exercised the thoughts and ingenuity of the Fathers. Irenæus mentions a diversity in the reading; instead of the number 666, some copies, he observes, read 616, a reading which actually occurs in Codex C. There is no doubt, however, that 666 is the correct reading. Irenæus suggests three interpretations: "The name Evanthas (ἐβάνθας) contains the required number, but I make no remark regarding it. Lateinos (λατεῖνος) has the number 666, and is a very probable solution, this being the name of the last kingdom (of Daniel). Teitan (τεῖταν) is also worthy of credit, for it has in itself the predicted number, and is composed of six letters."¹ Victorinus also considers that Teitan is a plausible solution.² Modern critics now generally consider that the number denotes Cæsar Nero written in Hebrew characters (קֶסֶר נְרוֹן).³ "The secret," observes Archdeacon Farrar, "has been almost simultaneously rediscovered

¹ Irenæus, *Adv. Haer.*, v. 30, 3.

² Victorinus, *In Apoc.*, ch. xiii.

³ ק=100, ס=60, ר=200, נ=50, ר=200, ו=6, נ=50.

of late years by Fritzsche in Halle, Benary in Berlin, Reuss in Strasburg, and Hitzig in Heidelberg.¹

But such a supposition is entirely fanciful. We would certainly expect that the name would be written, not in Hebrew, but in Greek characters in a book written in the Greek language. The Hebrew letter *yod* is generally contained in the rendering of the word *Cæsar*, קֵיסָר.² Besides, we have to do with the number of the beast, which is the Roman Empire, not with the number of one of its heads. The fanciful applications of the number are very numerous. Among persons supposed to be indicated are Caius Caligula, Trajan, Hadrian, Julian the Apostate, Genseric, Mahomet, Pope Benedict IX., Luther, Calvin, Beza, and Napoleon Bonaparte. The word *Lateinos* (λατεινός),³ as suggested by Irenæus, is as plausible as any. As Professor Salmon remarks, "There are three rules by the help of which I believe an ingenious man could find the required sum in any given name. First, if the proper name by itself will not yield it, add a title; secondly, if the sum cannot be found in Greek, try Hebrew, or even Latin; thirdly, be not too particular about the spelling. For example, if Nero will not do, try *Cæsar Nero*. If this will not

¹ *Early Days of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 297, note. See also Bleek's *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, p. 284; Krenkel, *Der Apostel Johannes*, p. 88. The credit of priority belongs to Fritzsche (*Annalen der gesammten theol. Litteratur*, 1831), although little attention was paid to his discovery until propounded by the other critics, six years later.

² "I do not," observes Bleek, "consider it (the above interpretation) correct, because in Jewish writings both the name נִירוֹן, as well as קֵיסָר, is written with a *yod* after the first consonant. It might have been probably absent from the name of Nero, but not well from קֵיסָר, since it is derived from the Greek *Kaisar*." So also the opinion that the number of the beast is Nero is not accepted by De Wette, Lücke, Bunsen, Düsterdieck.

³ λ = 30, α = 1, τ = 300, ε = 5, ι = 10, κ = 50, ο = 70, σ = 200.

succeed in Greek, try Hebrew; and in writing *Kaisar* in Hebrew, be sure to leave out the *yod*, which would make the sum too much by ten. We cannot infer much from the fact that a key fits the lock, if it is a lock in which almost any key will turn.”¹

Some theologians (Dannemann, Lightfoot, Westcott, Salmon), who are opposed to all these views and reasons, yet affirm the early date of the Apocalypse from linguistic considerations. Their great argument is that the difference between the Greek of the Apocalypse and the Greek of the Fourth Gospel, if these books proceed from the same author, can only be accounted for on the supposition that a considerable interval of time elapsed between the composition of these books. When John wrote the Apocalypse he did not possess such a knowledge of Greek as he afterwards acquired during his long residence in Ephesus.² Thus, as Westcott observes, “it is not difficult to see that intercourse with a Greek-speaking people would in a short time naturally reduce the style of the author of the Apocalypse to that of the author of the Gospel. It is, however, very difficult to suppose that the language of the writer of the Gospel could pass at a later time in a Greek-speaking country into the language of the Apocalypse.”³ There is undoubtedly force in this objection. If we assign the Apocalypse to the reign of Galba or Vespasian, we may find a reason for the linguistic difference between it and the Fourth Gospel; but if

¹ Salmon's *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 300.

² See *supra*, pp. 302-304.

³ Westcott, *Introduction to St. John's Gospel in the Speaker's Commentary*, pp. lxxxiv.-lxxxvii.

we assign it to a later date—to the time of Domitian—then we lose the argument for the identity of authorship drawn from the lapse of time which intervened between the composition of these books, and thus increase the difficulty of proving such an identity. But, on the other hand, it must be remembered that there are other reasons that have been assigned for these linguistic differences, such as the different natures of the books and the different mental states of the author at the time of writing.¹

The other date assigned for the composition of the Apocalypse is A.D. 95 or 96, shortly after the death of Domitian. This opinion, though it has not the same number of authorities in its favour as the other opinion, has been adopted by such men as Lardner, Hug, Hofmann, Van Oosterzee, J. P. Lange, Ebrard, Hengstenberg, Alford, Elliott, Godet, Klieforth, Lee, Wordsworth, Warfield, and Milligan.

The external evidence for it is much stronger than for the rival opinion. We have here the important testimony of Irenæus. "If it were necessary that his (Antichrist's) name should be distinctly revealed in this present time, it would have been announced by him who saw the Revelation. For it was seen not very long ago, almost in our own generation, at the close of the reign of Domitian."² This testimony of Irenæus is also twice alluded to by Eusebius in his

¹ Professor Salmon suggests, as another way of accounting for the better Greek of the Gospel, that John may have written the Apocalypse without assistance, and may have had the help of an amanuensis in writing the Gospel.

² Οὐδὲ γὰρ πρὸ πολλοῦ χρόνου ἐωράθη, ἀλλὰ σχεδὸν ἐπὶ τῆς ἡμετέρας γενεᾶς πρὸς τῷ τέλει τῆς Δομετιανοῦ ἀρχῆς. *Adv. Hæc.*, v. 30, 3.

History.¹ Its importance consists in the nearness of time when he wrote to the composition of the Apocalypse, and in the relation of pupil in which Irenæus stood to Polycarp, the disciple of John. Indeed, this statement is so clear and pointed, that it requires those whose method of interpreting the Apocalypse constrains them to assign its date to the reign of Galba or Vespasian, to employ the most desperate methods to explain and neutralise it. Some suppose that the nominative to the verb *ἐωράθη* (it was seen) is not *ἀποκάλυψις* (the revelation), but *Ἰωάννης* (John): "John was seen." But this is a meaning that the words will not bear, as *ἀποκάλυψις* is the immediate antecedent. Guericke supposes that Domitian, *Δομετιανοῦ*, is here not a substantive, but an adjective formed from *Δομετιος*, "belonging to Domitian," and that the reference is to Domitius Nero, and not to the Emperor Domitian.² But this is a most improbable supposition. Domitius is a title very rarely applied to Nero, and every reader would understand that the Emperor Domitian is here meant. Archdeacon Farrar can see no way of getting out of the difficulty than by the bold assertion, "Irenæus may have been misinterpreted; but even if not, he may have made a slip of memory and confused Domitian with Nero."³ Nor is this testimony of Irenæus single; it is confirmed by the testimony of other Fathers.

¹ *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 18; v. 8.

² Guericke, *Isagogik*, p. 61, note 1.

³ Farrar's *Early Days of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 186. So also Weiss observes, "It is manifestly an error, when, in opposition to this clear testimony of the Apocalypse itself, Irenæus says that the Apocalypse was seen towards the end of Domitian's reign." *Einführung*, p. 384; translation, vol. ii. p. 84.

Clemens Alexandrinus, in the legend of John and the robber, does not indeed mention Domitian, but states generally that John returned to Ephesus after the death of the tyrant; but Eusebius, who gives the narrative, evidently understood that by the "tyrant" Clement meant Domitian.¹ Victorinus, Bishop of Pettau (A.D. 290), says, "When John said these things, he was in the island of Patmos, condemned to the mines by Cæsar Domitian. There he saw the Apocalypse; and when at length grown old, he thought that he should receive his release by suffering; but Domitian being killed, he was liberated."² Eusebius repeatedly assigns this date to the Apocalypse: "About this time John, the apostle and evangelist, governed the Church of Asia after his return from exile on the island and the death of Domitian."³ And so also Jerome says, "John, having been banished in the fourteenth year of Domitian to the island of Patmos, wrote the Apocalypse."⁴

Nor is the internal evidence in favour of this date without weight. The following points are worthy of consideration:—1. The Churches in Asia had evidently existed for some time. Some of them had passed from a state of religious fervour into one of lukewarmness and indifference. The Church of Ephesus had left its

¹ *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 23.

² Victorinus, *In Apoc.*, chap. x.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 23; iii. 20.

⁴ Jerome, *Catal. Vir. Illustr.*, c. q.; also *Adv. Jovinianum*, ii. 14. See Kirchhoffer's *Quellensammlung*, pp. 327, 328. The reader is referred to Elliott's *Horæ Apocalyptice*, vol. i. pp. 35-54, as containing the most exhaustive discussion of the external evidence relating to the date of the Apocalypse.

first love; the Church of Sardis had a name to live, but was dead; the Church of Laodicea was lukewarm, neither cold nor hot. 2. The ecclesiastical organisation of the Church seems to have been further advanced than it appears to have been from the Pastoral Epistles. Each Church had now its own Bishop, who was regarded as its representative, and to whom the other office-bearers were subordinate; for such, we think, is the most natural interpretation of the phrase "the angel of the Church."¹ 3. Christians in general were exposed to persecution. Mention is made of those who were slain for the word of God (Rev. vi. 9). And whereas it may be said that this is a prediction of future persecution, in the Epistles to the Seven Churches there are traces of actual persecution. The Church of Smyrna was tried and had tribulation; and in the Church of Pergamos mention is made of Antipas, Christ's faithful martyr. This state of matters is more in accordance with the persecution under Domitian, which was general throughout the Empire, than with the persecution under Nero, which was an outburst of imperial fury, and confined chiefly to Rome. 4. The Church was corrupted by heresies. Mention is made of the Nicolaitanes, a licentious, heretical sect of Jewish Gnostics, alluded to by Irenæus. These heresies must have taken time to develop; and although there are undoubtedly traces of them in the later Epistles of Paul, yet the description of them in the Apocalyptic Epistles is more suitable to the close

¹ Rev. ii. 1. "The Apocalypse," says Godet, "brings before us the period of transition from the primitive Presbyterian constitution to the monarchic organisation which is universally admitted to have prevailed in the second century."—*Biblical Studies*, p. 338.

of the Apostolic age. Heresy appeared in a state of greater development than it does in the Epistles of Paul.¹ 5. Laodicea is represented as in a prosperous condition. This city was in the reign of Nero destroyed by an earthquake. "The same year" (A.D. 62) writes Tacitus, "Laodicea, one of the most famous cities of Asia, having been prostrated by an earthquake, recovered its pristine glory from its own resources, and without any relief from us."² In the Apocalypse the members of the Laodicean Church are represented as "rich and increased in goods" (Rev. iii. 17). Now this prosperous condition of Laodicea suits better the time of Domitian than that of Galba, as time must be allowed for its recovery.

Such are the arguments in favour of the two dates which have been assigned to the Apocalypse. Although perhaps no positive conclusion can be arrived at, yet, notwithstanding that the first opinion has the greater number of theologians and critics in its favour, we must acknowledge that the preponderance of evidence, both external and internal, is in favour of assigning the date to the close of the reign of Domitian (A.D. 96).

There is not much difference of opinion as regards the place of writing. The author himself tells us that he was in Patmos, when the series of visions were imparted to him (Rev. i. 9). The probability is that these visions were written down soon after they were imparted; and

¹ Weizäcker admits that the evidence of the prevalence of persecution and of a late period in the development of Gnostic heresy is such as to imply a date not earlier than Domitian, although he holds that a portion of the book was written earlier. *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, pp. 510-512.

² Tacitus, *Annals*, xiv. 27.

if so, the place of writing was Patmos. Some think that the book was not written immediately, but that the Apostle wrote it on his return to Ephesus.

V.—DESIGN AND CONTENTS.

The nature and design of the Apocalypse is thus stated in the book itself: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show unto His servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass, and He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John." And again: "Write therefore the things that thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter" (Rev. i. 1, 19). The book then was invested with a prophetic character; it was written for the edification of the Church in all ages, and not merely for the edification of the Seven Churches of Asia; it contained a record not only of the present, "of the things which are" (*ἃ εἰσὶν*), but also of the future, "of the things which shall come to pass hereafter" (*ἃ μέλλει γινέσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα*). To overlook this predictive element, or to give it a subordinate place, is to misconceive the nature of the book. The great fact predicted is the final victory of Christ over all His enemies. The conflict between good and evil—between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan—is throughout the book described in mystic terms. All terminates in the complete discomfiture of Satan, and in the final subjugation or destruction of all the enemies of Christ. Connected with this is the advent of Christ—His coming for the deliverance of His people (Rev. i. 7).

But the immediate advent of Christ is not here asserted. It is true that it is said that the things predicted are those which must shortly come to pass, and that the time is at hand; and toward the close of the book we have the declaration, "Behold I come quickly" (Rev. i. 1, 3; xxii. 10, 20). But various times and seasons are represented as intervening between the time that the Apostle wrote and the future advent; in one place a period of a thousand years. Time is short when viewed in the light of eternity, in the sight of Him with whom one day is as a thousand years. The great moral design of the Apocalypse is to comfort and support Christians under the trials and persecutions to which they were exposed, by assuring them that these trials were of short duration, and that their enemies would at length be conquered and destroyed.¹

The unity of the Apocalypse has been seldom questioned. Grotius supposed that different parts of the Apocalypse were composed by the same author at different times, partly in Patmos and partly in Ephesus, and thus endeavours to reconcile the different views with respect to the time of writing. Vogel supposes that it is not the work of one author, but that it was written at different times by different persons, partly by John the Apostle, and partly by John the Presbyter, and in this manner accounts for the diversity of opinion with regard to the author. Weizäcker supposes that the chief part of the work was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, but that the Epistles to the

¹ "If," says Godet, "the Gospels are principally intended to lay the foundations of faith, and the Epistles to enkindle love, the Apocalypse gives food for hope."

Seven Churches are a later addition, whilst the presence of the doctrine of the Logos makes it impossible to ascribe the whole to the first century.¹ We have already adverted to the recent views of modern critics, Völter, Vischer, and Spitta, who suppose the Apocalypse to be a compilation of various documents, partly Jewish and partly Christian, arranged by a redactor. There is no foundation for any of these opinions. There are no indications of separate authors; a uniform style pervades the whole book. The predictions are symmetrically arranged. The threefold visions—the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials—constitute the body of the work; and there is a sameness in the mode of denouncing the judgments which proves the hand of one writer.

The best general arrangement of the contents is that given by Professor Warfield of Princeton. Prologue, i. 1–8. (1.) The Seven Churches, i. 9–iii. 22. (2.) The seven seals, iv. 1–viii. 1. (3.) The seven trumpets, viii. 2–xi. 19. (4.) The seven mystic figures, xii. 1–xiv. 20. (5.) The seven vials, xv. 1–xvi. 21. (6.) The sevenfold judgment of the whore, xvii. 1–xix. 10. (7.) The sevenfold triumph, xix. 11–xxii. 5. The epilogue, xxii. 6–12.¹

¹ *Apostolisches Zeitalter*, p. 504 ff.

² Schaff's *Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*, vol. iii. p. 2036. Perhaps the sevenfold division of the sections, 4, 6, and 7, is somewhat fanciful. Eichhorn considers it to be a dramatic poem in three acts. He gives the following arrangement:—1. The title, i. 1–3. 2. The prologue, i. 4–iii. 22. 3. The drama, iv. 1–xxii. 5. Act 1. The taking of Jerusalem, or the triumph of Christianity over Judaism. Act 2. The taking of Rome, or the triumph of Christianity over Paganism. Act 3. The New Jerusalem. 4. The epilogue, xxii. 6–21. *Einleitung in das N. T.*, vol. ii. § 188, p. 334 ff. For a full statement of the contents of the Apocalypse, see especially Düs-

John commences his Revelation with the announcement of its design (i. 1-3). He then addresses the Seven Churches of Asia, wishing them the apostolic blessing of grace and peace from the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity,¹ and closing with a doxology to Christ (i. 4-8). The vision of the exalted Christ that was imparted to him is next described (i. 9-20). Then follow the Epistles of Christ to the Seven Churches in Asia, in which He reproves, commends, exhorts, and comforts them (ii., iii.). Then follows the glorious description of the throne of God, in whose right hand is the great book of the future, sealed with seven seals (iv.-v. 1). The Lamb in the midst of the throne is the only being in heaven and on earth who is worthy to open that book and to reveal its contents (v. 2-14). Then follows the opening of six of the seven seals; on the opening of the first four, four horses appear, the emblems of victory, war, famine, and pestilence; on the opening of the fifth, the martyrs are exhorted to patience; and on the opening of the sixth, the signs of the coming of the Son of Man are seen (vi.). The elect, both Jews and Gentiles, are then sealed in order to be preserved from the destruction which shall befall the world (vii.). The opening of the seventh seal is followed by the sounding of the seven trumpets; plagues and pestilences, wars and famines on the earth, are announced

terdieck's *Offenbarung*, pp. 1-12; Bleek's *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, pp. 4-22; Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iv., Prolegomena, pp. 243, 244; Lücke's *Offenbarung*, pp. 6-21.

¹ By "the seven Spirits which are before the throne" is meant not seven angels, but the Holy Ghost, seven being the sign of perfection. "Thou the anointing Spirit art, Who dost Thy sevenfold gifts impart." See Düsterdieck *in loco*.

(viii.-ix.). An angel appears with a little book which John is commanded to eat, and thus he is anew commissioned to prophesy before peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings (x.). Then follow several remarkable visions. The first is that of the two witnesses who prophesy clothed in sackcloth (xi.). The second is that of the woman clothed with the sun and persecuted by the dragon (xii.). The third is that of the beast with seven heads and ten horns, rising out of the sea (xiii. 1-10). The fourth is that of the second beast with two horns coming out of the earth (xiii. 11-18). The Lamb then appears standing on Mount Zion, and an angel proclaims the fall of Babylon, the great seat of Antichrist, and the victory of Christ over all His enemies (xiv.). Then follows the pouring out of the seven vials, or the seven last plagues (xv., xvi.). Then succeeds the vision of the mystic Babylon, the abode of Antichrist, compared to a lascivious woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast (xvii.). Then the fall of Babylon is described in terms similar to the description of the fall of Tyre in the prophecies of Ezekiel (xviii.). Then follows the great victory of Christ and His people over the beast and the false prophet (xix.). Then succeed the Millennium, the last struggle between Christ and His enemies, the general resurrection, the judgment, and the complete victory of Christ and His people (xx.). Then follows a description of the New Jerusalem and of the eternal blessedness of the redeemed (xxi.-xxii. 18). The Apocalypse closes with a special warning against those who shall add to or diminish from the words of this prophecy (xxii. 18-21).

The structure of the Apocalypse is peculiar; in the boldness of its symbols and in the sublimity of its conception, it is more remarkable than the prophecy of Daniel, to which it is most nearly allied. There is a luxuriance in the symbolism employed, and a fervid and glowing imagination in the descriptions given. It makes large use of the mystic properties of numbers. There are "the time, and times, and half a time" (xii. 14), which most probably denotes three years and a half, and if so, correspond with the forty and two months (xi. 2), and the one thousand two hundred and threescore days (xi. 3). The number *four*¹ frequently occurs. There are four living creatures before the throne; four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth; four angels loosed from the Euphrates to vex the human race; a voice issues from the four corners of the altar; Satan deceives the nations which are in the four corners of the earth; and the New Jerusalem lieth four-square. But especially the number *seven*² predominates. The Apocalypse is addressed to the seven Churches which are in Asia; there are seven candlesticks and seven stars; there are seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials; seven thunders utter their voices; there are seven spirits before the throne; the Lamb has seven horns and seven eyes; the beast has seven heads; there are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth; and there are seven kings.³ It would

¹ Four is said to be the number of nature or of the world, of terrestrial extension.

² Seven is asserted to be the number of perfection.

³ Besides these, the numbers *two*, *three*, and *twelve* are frequently repeated.

also appear that the seals, the trumpets, and the vials are all so connected that the sounding of the seven trumpets corresponds with the opening of the seventh seal, and the pouring out of the seven vials corresponds with the sounding of the seventh trumpet.

VI.—THE TEXT OF THE APOCALYPSE.

The manuscripts which contain the Apocalypse are much fewer than those containing the other portions of the New Testament. Erasmus, when he published his Greek Testament, had only one manuscript of the Apocalypse, and that an imperfect one, so that the last six verses he himself supplied by translating them from the Vulgate into Greek. Wetstein informs us that the Complutensian editors had only one manuscript, and that Robert Stephens had only two, and these imperfectly collated; and it is the edition of Stephens that forms the basis of the *textus receptus* and of our Authorised Version, so that no portion of the Greek New Testament requires more corrections.¹ The known manuscripts of the Apocalypse are reckoned at a hundred and twenty,² some of which are imperfect; whereas the manuscripts of the Gospels are nearly ten times more numerous, being eight hundred Greek manuscripts, besides four hundred

¹ The English version of the Apocalypse, observes Archdeacon Lee, "represents a Greek text which does not rest upon the same authority as that of the other books of the New Testament." *Speaker's Commentary*, vol. iv. p. 463.

² By Scrivener in his third edition, at 122. A number of these MSS. are written after the invention of printing; many of them are also in a mutilated form.

copies of lectionaries, containing lessons from the Gospels.

Notwithstanding this paucity of manuscripts, there are ample materials to enable us to form a correct text of the Apocalypse. The most important manuscripts are four uncial ones: the Sinaitic, or Codex \aleph , of the fourth century; the Alexandrian, or Codex A., of the fifth century; the Codex Ephraemi, or C., of the fifth century;¹ the so-called Codex Vaticanus, or B. of the Apocalypse, of the eighth century,² which, however, must not be confounded with the celebrated Vatican manuscript B., which does not contain the Apocalypse in the original hand; and the Codex Porphyranus, or P., of the ninth century.³ Besides these there are numerous cursive manuscripts: there are the versions especially of the Old Latin, the Vulgate, and the Egyptian,⁴ whilst the Apocalypse is wanting in the Peshito; and there are the quotations from the Fathers, all of which are of importance in correcting the *textus receptus*, and in procuring a correct text. From the labour which has been expended in collating manuscripts and comparing versions and patristic quotations, we have no reason to doubt the accuracy of the text which forms the basis of the revised edition.

¹ Codex C. is defective; it wants 171 verses of the Apocalypse, or about eight chapters.

² For a description of this Codex see Scrivener's *Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 140, 1st edit., p. 162, 3rd edit.

³ P. is a palimpsest brought to St. Petersburg by Porphyry, Bishop of Uspensk, in 1862; it was printed by Tischendorf in 1869.

⁴ In both the Egyptian versions, the Memphitic and the Thebaic, the Apocalypse appears to have been excluded from the canon, and treated as an appendix, as if of secondary importance. Scrivener's *Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, 3rd edit., pp. 377, 388. "It seems clear," he observes, "that the Apocalypse had not a place among the canonical books. In the majority of cases it is contained in a separate manuscript."

DISSERTATION I.

LITERARY AFFINITIES OF THE APOCALYPSE.

LITERATURE.—On this subject the following works may be mentioned:—Fabricius, *Codex Pseudepigraphus V. T.*, and *Codex Apocryphus N. T.*; Fritzsche, *V. T. Pseudepigraphi Selecti*; Jones *On the Canon* (edit. 1832); Lee's *Commentary on the Revelation in Speaker's Commentary*; Lücke, *Einleitung in das Offenbarung Johannis* (1832); Moses Stuart's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*; Volkmar's *Handbuch der Einleitung in der Apocryphen*; Hilgenfeld's *Die judaische Apocryphen*; Dillmann's *Das Buch Enoch* (1853), and *Ascensio Isaïæ* (1877); Friedlieb, *Oracula Sibyllina*; Schürer's *Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, division ii. vol. iii.; Auberlen, *Daniel und die Offenbarung Johannis*; Godet's *Biblical Studies*; Milligan's *Baird Lectures* (1885); Articles by J. W. Deane in *Theological Monthly*; Article on Apocalyptic Literature by Dr. S. Davidson in *Encyclopædia Britannica*; Drummond's *Jewish Messiah* (London, 1877); Article on *Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments* by Dr. Dillmann, in *Herzog und Plitt's Real-Encyclopædia*; Article by Dr. Wright on *Spurious Revelations* in Kitto's *Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*.

WE have defined apocalyptic writings to be *predictions referring to the last things, imparted in the form of visions and symbolical representations*. Such writings are chiefly confined to Jewish and Christian literature, and are almost entirely wanting in Pagan literature. Apocalypses, in general eschatological discourses, as regards their manner, abound in material images and symbolical representations taken from the animal world or from the operations of Nature. Kings and kingdoms are represented under the symbolism of monstrous

animals, and historical events, such as wars, famines, and pestilences, under the symbolism of the eclipsing of the sun or the falling of the stars. To understand the specific literary character of apocalyptic writings, we have only to compare the prophecies of Isaiah with the visions of Zechariah, or the predictions of Paul with those of John. Most of these writings originate in times of national distress, and their scope and object is to support the people under calamity with the prospect of ultimate deliverance and the expectation of a period of glory and victory. "They owe their origin," observes Schürer, "on the one hand, to a pessimistic view of the present, and, on the other hand, to an intense faith in the glorious future of the people."¹ Hence there is a great similarity in apocalyptic writings. There is an arch-enemy, the Beliar of the Jews or the Antichrist of the Christians, to be overcome; there is a great deliverer, the Messiah, who leads the people to victory; and there is a future state of prosperity, the Millennium, which is in store for them. Thus, for the sake of illustration, in the time of the Maccabees, during the struggle with the Syrian kings, and especially when the Jews were suffering under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, apocalyptic writings appeared foretelling victory, proclaiming a deliverer in the person of the Messiah, and announcing a period of glory and happiness.² And

¹ Schürer, *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, division ii, vol. iii. p. 47, English translation. Lücke defines Apokalyptik to be "the subject-matter of the revelation, as well of the Old as of the New Testament, respecting the end of all things."

² In these writings Antiochus Epiphanes is the type of Antichrist, as in Christian apocalyptic writings it is Nero. Some of the Sibylline Oracles probably belong to this period.

during the subsequent critical periods of their national history, when Pompey invaded their country, and forced his entrance into the holy of holies, or when the Herodian family, an alien race, especially when Herod the Great tyrannised over the people, or when the great Jewish war broke out, and the Jews were engaged in a death struggle with the Roman armies, their courage and faith were preserved, and rose to a high pitch of fanaticism, by the diffusion of apocalyptic literature, which foretold the destruction of their enemies, effected by the advent of the Messiah and the establishment of His kingdom.

The later prophecies of the Old Testament are for the most part apocalyptic. "The apocalyptic vision," says Godet, "is the last form in which the prophecy in the Old Testament clothed itself."¹ The Jews having undergone a cruel captivity in Babylon, and being exposed, even after their return, to the attacks of unscrupulous enemies, the conditions were present in which the apocalyptic spirit naturally takes its rise. Belonging to this class of writings are the Book of Daniel, the earlier and later prophecies of Ezekiel, and the greater portion of the prophecies of Zechariah; these are eschatological in their nature, and abound in visions and symbolical representations. In the period intervening between the commencement of the struggle of the Maccabees and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus, there was a rich Jewish literature, chiefly of an apocalyptic nature, the remains of which have survived to our days. These works are

¹ Godet's *Biblical Studies*, p. 291.

pseudonymous, purporting to be the writings of the saints of the Old Testament, as Enoch, Moses, Isaiah, Baruch, and Ezra. The Book of Enoch, quoted by Jude, frequently alluded to by the Fathers,¹ and, after having been lost for more than a thousand years, discovered towards the close of last century by Bruce, the Abyssinian traveller, is an apocalyptic work of considerable merit, containing some sublime descriptions. It is a record of the struggles of the Jews under the Maccabees, and contains several Messianic statements. It is a composite work, embracing several documents of unequal merit, written at different times, but is generally believed to be pre-Christian, the different parts being composed between the reign of John Hyrcanus and the early days of Herod the Great.² The Assumption of Moses (*ἀνάληψις Μωυσέως*), from which, according to Origen, Jude borrowed his account of the contention between Michael the archangel and the Devil about the body of Moses,³ and which is frequently referred to by the Fathers,⁴ was discovered in a fragmentary state in 1861 by Ceriani in the Ambrosian Library of Milan, and was published by him.⁵ It is evidently the work of a Jewish zealot, as it attacks the Pharisees and the

¹ It is alluded to or quoted by Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, Anatolius, and Augustine.

² The Book of Enoch was translated by Laurence in 1821, by Dillmann in 1853, and by Schodde in 1881. For an account of it, see the author's *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, Dissertation on the Book of Enoch, pp. 386-408; and articles on it by the Rev. J. W. Deane in the *Theological Monthly* for July and October 1890.

³ Origen, *De Principiis*, iii. 2, 1.

⁴ Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, Didymus of Alexandria, Nicephorus, Ecumenius.

⁵ Ceriani, *Monumenta Sacra et Profana ex Codicibus præsertim Bibliothecæ Ambrosianæ*.

Maccabean princes. It promises a Messianic deliverance under a mysterious person called Taxo; and must have been written after the death of Herod the Great, the length of whose reign is accurately stated, but before the Jewish war, of which it makes no mention. Ewald thinks that the book was written A.D. 6, after the rebellion of Judas the Gaulonite, who, he supposes, is meant by Taxo; whilst Hilgenfeld assigns it to the reign of Claudius.¹ The so-called fourth Book of Esdras,² included in the Apocrypha, and added as an appendix to the Roman Vulgate, and frequently alluded to by the Fathers,³ contains an allegorical account of the dominion of the Romans under the symbol of an eagle with three heads and twelve wings, which was destroyed by the Messiah under the symbol of a lion. It is a Jewish document, but has evidently been interpolated by a Christian hand. There is great uncertainty as to its date; Drummond supposes that it was written in the last quarter of the first century, Ewald refers it to the time of Titus, Dillmann and Schürer to the reign of Domitian, and Volkmar as late as the time of Nerva.⁴ The Revelation of Baruch, found in a Syriac text, was

¹ See Drummond's *Jewish Messiah*, pp. 74-84; an article on the Assumption of Moses by Rev. W. J. Deane in the *Monthly Interpreter* for 1885; and Gloag's *Introduction to the Catholic Epistles*, pp. 373-386. For the Latin text of the work see Volkmar's *Mose Himmelfahrt*, and Hilgenfeld's *Messiah Judæorum*.

² So called because the canonical Ezra was counted as the first, the Book of Nehemiah as the second, the Greek Esdras of the Apocrypha as the third, and this book, found only in a Latin version, as the fourth.

³ Irenæus, Tertullian, Clemens Alexandrinus.

⁴ See Drummond's *Jewish Messiah*, pp. 84-117; Schürer's *Jewish People in the Days of Christ*, division ii. vol. iii. pp. 93-114; Lücke's *Offenbarung*, section xiii. pp. 78-115; Volkmar's *Handbuch der Einleitung in die Apocryphen*.

brought to light by Ceriani, who published a Latin version of it in 1866. It was from this book that Papias derived several of his chiliastic notions. "There can be no doubt," observes Drummond, "that it was written by a non-Christian Jew. Though it is rich in Messianic passages, I have not observed a single expression which betrays a Christian hand." It is supposed to have been written about A.D. 72.¹ The Sibylline oracles, frequently referred to by the Fathers, are partly Jewish and partly Christian productions. Of these there are reckoned fourteen books. The third Sibylline book is the most important; it has generally been considered to be a Jewish Apocalypse, and has been assigned by some to a date as early as B.C. 124, whilst others make it a century later (B.C. 40-30).² The Testimony of the Twelve Patriarchs, which some affirm to be a Jewish work with Christian interpolations, and others, with greater probability, to be wholly a Jewish Christian work, is full of Messianic passages, and has been assigned to the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 135).³ In addition to those enumerated, the names of over a dozen similar writings, which are now lost, have been preserved by the Fathers.⁴

¹ See Drummond's *Jewish Messiah*, pp. 117-132; Schürer's *Jewish People*, division ii. vol. iii. pp. 83-93; Ewald's *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, vol. vii. pp. 83-87; Deane in *Monthly Interpreter*, April 1885, pp. 451-461.

² Drummond's *Jewish Messiah*, pp. 10-16; Schürer's *Jewish People*, division ii. vol. iii. pp. 271-292; Freidlieb, *Oracula Sibyllina*; Hilgenfeld, *Die jüdische Apok.*; Moses Stuart's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, pp. 67-83.

³ It is alluded to by Origen, Jerome, and Nicephorus. It was first brought to the knowledge of the Western Church by Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln. A translation of it is given in Clark's *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, attached to the second volume of the works of Lactantius.

⁴ Fabricius' *Codex Pseudepigraphus V. T.*; Schürer's *Jewish People*, division ii. vol. iii. pp. 126-127.

The question arises, Are there any resemblances in the Apocalypse of John to the pre-Christian Jewish Apocalypses which would lead us to infer that John borrowed from them or was indebted to them? This question we answer in the negative, for, except in general points, such as the enemy, the deliverer, and the Millennium, which are common to all apocalyptic writings, there is, so far as we can see, no evidence that John was indebted for his symbolism to these Jewish apocalyptic writings. The only possible exception to this remark is the "Book of Enoch," from which Ewald thinks that the author of the Apocalypse derived several of his symbols. Many expressions are the same in both writings. Thus in the Book of Enoch the Messiah is represented not as the ideal King, but as the Son of Man; the Lord is seen with the hair of his head as white as wool; an angel accompanies Enoch in his journeys as his interpreter, and explains to him the future; the doctrine of the angels is in several respects similar to that contained in the Apocalypse; they are employed as the ministers of the divine vengeance, or else as the defenders and helpers of the righteous; they are known by distinctive names, and among them Michael is specially mentioned. But these undoubted similitudes are accounted for, not by supposing that John borrowed his figures and symbols from the Book of Enoch, but that both derived their illustrations from the prophecies of Daniel. The Book of Enoch is formed after the model of Daniel, and the Apocalypse also undoubtedly borrows largely from the same source; all the points mentioned as common to the two writings are found in the Book of Daniel.

But there are not only Jewish, but also numerous Christian apocalyptic writings, and the resemblance between them and the Apocalypse of John is very marked and evident, proving that they were formed after the model of that book. In the second and third centuries numerous apocalyptic books are mentioned under the pseudonymous names of prophets and apostles. We read of the Apocalypse of Peter, the Revelation of Paul, the Revelation of Bartholomew, the Revelation of Thomas, the Revelation of Stephen, the Apocalypse of Mary, of which hardly anything has been preserved but the names.¹ Several of the Sibylline books are also of Christian origin. The Ascension of Isaiah (ἀναβατικὸν Ἰσαΐου), alluded to by Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Epiphanius, repeatedly mentioned by Origen, and adverted to by Jerome as *Ascensio Isaia*, after having been lost for centuries, was discovered in an Ethiopic manuscript, and published by Archbishop Laurence in 1819.² It consists of two parts, and indeed of two different works. The first part contains an account of the martyrdom of Isaiah, and is generally supposed to be of Jewish origin with Christian interpolations. The Antichrist or Berial is in the form of a matricidal king, evidently Nero. The second part is of Christian origin, and is docetic in its tendency; it professes to be a vision imparted to Isaiah of Christ from His birth to His crucifixion. The

¹ Fabricius in his *Codex Apoc. N. Test.*, 1713-22, gives an account of twelve apocryphal Apocalypses. See also Jones *On the Canon*, vol. i. pp. 26-33, ed. 1827, where a list of Christian apocryphal books is given, and the authorities for them stated. Lücke's *Einleitung in die Offenbarung Johannis*, 1832, pp. 22-155.

² *Ascensio Isaiae Vatis, opusculum pseudepigraphum cum versione Latina Anglicanaque publici juris factum.*

probable date of the work is about the close of the second century.¹ There is in it the following striking allusion to Rev. xix. 10: "And I fell upon my face to worship him, but the angel who conducted me stopped me, saying, Worship not either an angel or the throne of him who is in the sixth heaven, whence I am sent to conduct thee, until in the seventh heaven I bid thee. . . . Immediately the angel who conducted me said to me, Worship Him, and I worshipped and adored Him."²

There is also extant a spurious Apocalypse of John, being an extravagant imitation of the genuine Apocalypse. Its title is similar to that of the Apocalypse as found in some manuscripts: ἀποκάλυψις τοῦ ἁγίου ἀποστόλου καὶ εὐαγγελιστοῦ Ἰωάννου τοῦ θεολόγου. It is first mentioned by Theodosius the Grammarian, but we are ignorant when he lived; probably it belongs to the fifth century.³ The Apocalypse is in itself worthless, and is mentioned only as being formed after the Revelation of John. Its general contents are as follows: John, after the ascension of Christ, goes to Mount Tabor. He entreats the Lord for a revelation of the advent of Christ, and of the fate of the earth and heaven. After a fast of seven days, he is conveyed in a bright cloud to heaven, and he hears a voice saying, "Holy John, hear and under-

¹ See Schürer's *Jewish People*, vol. iii. pp. 141-146; Lücke's *Offenbarung*, pp. 125-141; Moses Stuart's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, pp. 28-36. Article on Spurious Revelations in *Kitto's Cyclopædia*, vol. iii. pp. 676-678. The best edition is Dillmann's *Ascensio Isaie*, 1877.

² Hug's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 662.

³ After having been lost for a long time, it was published by Birch from two Greek manuscripts in his *Auctarium*. See *Kitto's Cyclopædia*, vol. iii. p. 680. There is a translation of it in Clarke's *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, in the volume containing Apocryphal Gospels, &c., pp. 492-504.

stand." The heavens are opened, and a stream of light, brighter than the rays of the sun, is poured upon him. He beholds a book sealed with seven seals, as thick as seven mountains, and so long that no man can measure it. This is the book of the future. John desires to know its contents. He is informed that there will first be a superfluity of corn and wine, and then a famine. Antichrist will appear in a fearful form, and will reign for three years. After this the two witnesses, Enoch and Elijah, will appear to expose his deceits, but they will perish. Then will all men upon the earth die. The Lord will appear, and will send forth His angels, Michael and Gabriel, who will sound their trumpets, and call the dead to life. All human beings will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then the heavens will be opened, and the New Jerusalem will descend as a bride adorned for her husband. Then Christ will descend in glory, accompanied with myriads of the heavenly host. All men and evil spirits, together with Antichrist, will stand before His tribunal. The Lamb will open the book of seven seals. Judgment will fall upon the evil spirits of Antichrist, and they will be cast into outer darkness, into a pit so deep that a heavy stone thrown into it will take three years before it reaches the bottom. The unbelieving heathen will be cast into Hades, and the Jews who crucified the Lord will be condemned to Tartarus. With regard to Christians, the angels will separate the righteous from the sinners: the righteous will be placed at the right hand of the Judge, and will shine as the sun and the stars, whilst the wicked will be cast into outer darkness. The

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righteous, with the holy angels, will live on earth, which will be converted into Paradise. Then all wickedness, all toil, all earthly vicissitudes will vanish.¹

But whilst the Apocalypse owes nothing to Jewish pseudonymous apocalyptic writings, and whilst it forms the groundwork of Christian Apocalypses, on the other hand it bears a very close relation to the apocalyptic writings of the Old Testament; it is in a great measure modelled after their form, and presents numerous resemblances to them. As Professor Milligan remarks: "It is a perfect mosaic of passages from the Old Testament, at one time quoted verbally, at another time referred to by distinct allusion."² The same material images, the same symbols, the same mystic numbers, the same visions which occur in the Apocalypse are found in the apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah: what are there found separately are here combined. So also the references to the history of the Old Testament are numerous, and pervade the whole book. The Nicolaitanes are the followers of the false prophet Balaam; the corrupter of the Church of Thyatira is that woman Jezebel; the leader of the angelic host is Michael the archangel; the arch-enemy is that old Serpent who is called the Devil and Satan; the adversaries of the Church are the innumerable hordes of Gog and Magog, or Babylon; the two witnesses suggest Moses and Elias; the song of Moses after the destruction of the enemies of Israel at the Red Sea is sung along with the song of the Lamb in the courts of the heavenly

¹ See Lücke's *Offenbarung*, § 18, 146-152; Moses Stuart's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, pp. 94-96; Clarke's *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Apocryphal Revelations.

² Milligan, *Baird Lectures* for 1885, p. 76.

temple ; and heaven itself is substantially the Paradise of Genesis restored.¹ Hence one important rule for the interpretation of this mysterious book is the careful study of the apocalyptic predictions of the Old Testament ; to examine into the figures and symbols and numbers therein contained, and to seek in them the key for unlocking the mysteries of the Apocalypse.

The book which bears the closest resemblance to the Apocalypse, and after which it appears to be in a considerable measure formed, is the Book of Daniel.² This book forms the groundwork not only of the Apocalypse of John, but of the apocalyptic literature of the Jews. The same symbols of living creatures of monstrous forms are found in most of these works, as the bulls and ravenous birds of the Book of Enoch, and the eagle and the lion of Fourth Esdras. In the Apocalypse the description of the throne of God and the glorious appearance of the Son of Man, the interposition of the angels, the mystic numbers, the description of the beast coming out of the sea, the statement concerning the arch-enemy and persecutor of the Church, the reference to the different kings and kingdoms, all have their counterparts in the prophecies of Daniel. We subjoin a list in parallel columns of those passages in which the resemblances most strikingly appear : to quote them all would occupy too large a space.

"Behold He cometh with the clouds, and every eye shall see Him."—REV. i. 7.

"I saw in the night visions, and behold there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a Son of Man."—DAN. vii. 13.

¹ See *super*, p. 305.

² See Auberlen, *Der Prophet Daniel und die Offenb. Joh.* Basel, 1854. Eng. translation, 1856.

"One like unto a Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white as white wool, white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire, and His feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and His voice as the voice of many waters."—REV. i. 13, 14.

"And I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands."—REV. v. 11.

"And the angel which I saw lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever . . . that there shall be time no longer."—REV. x. 5, 6.

"And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon."—REV. xii. 7.

"A time and times and half a time."—REV. xii. 14.

"And I saw a beast coming out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and on his heads names of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion."—REV. xiii. 1, 2.

"The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings."—REV. xvii. 12.

"Behold a man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with pure gold . . . and his eyes were as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to burnished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. . . . His raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool."—DAN. x. 5, 6; vii. 9.

"Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him."—DAN. vii. 10.

"And the man clothed in linen . . . when he held up his right hand to heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that it shall be for a time, times, and a half."—DAN. xii. 7.

"At that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people."—DAN. xii. 1.

"A time and times and half a time."—DAN. vii. 25; xii. 7.

"Four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion . . . another beast, a second, like to a bear . . . another like a leopard. . . . After this I saw behold a fourth beast, terrible and powerful, and strong exceedingly . . . and it had ten horns."—DAN. vii. 3-7.¹

"And as for the ten horns, out of this kingdom shall ten kings arise."—DAN. vii. 24.

¹ In the Apocalypse there is one beast, whilst in Daniel there are four; but the beast of the Apocalypse combines the natures of the first three beasts, the lion, the bear, and leopard; whilst no designation is given to the fourth beast of Daniel.

"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened."
—REV. xx. 12.

"The judgment was set, and the books were opened."—DAN. vii. 10.

Next to the Book of Daniel, the Apocalypse bears the closest resemblance to the apocalyptic visions in the prophecies of Ezekiel. The four living creatures are just the cherubim of Ezekiel; the tree of life growing beside the water of life is taken from the vision of the waters of the sanctuary; the fall of Babylon is described in language borrowed from the description of the fall of Tyre; and the last struggle of the Church with its great adversary is described as the invasion of Gog and Magog. The following is a list of the most remarkable resemblances:—

"And before the throne as it were a glassy sea, like unto crystal."—REV. iv. 6.

"And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind. And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had the face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying eagle."—REV. iv. 6, 7.

"Hurt not the earth, neither the sea nor the trees, till we shall have

"Over the head of the living creatures there was the likeness of a firmament, like the colour of the terrible crystal."—EZEK. i. 22.

"And out of the midst thereof came the likenesses of four living creatures. . . . As for the likeness of their faces, they had the face of a man, and they four had the face of a lion on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four had also the face of an eagle."—EZEK. i. 5, 10.¹

"Set a mark on the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for

¹ In the Apocalypse the four living creatures are each different, whilst in Ezekiel they are the same, each with four different faces: the man, the lion, the calf or ox, and the eagle are contained in each description. These four are transformed into the symbols of the Four Gospels, Matthew the man, Mark the lion, Luke the ox, and John the eagle. See Victorinus, *In Apoc.* on Rev. iv. 7-10. With Irenæus John is the lion and Mark the eagle. *Adv. Hær.*, iii. 11. 8.

sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads."—REV. vii. 3.

"And I went unto the angel, saying unto him that he should give me the little book. And he saith unto me, Take it and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey."—REV. x. 9.

"And there was given me a reed like unto a rod; and one said, Rise and measure the temple of God."—REV. xi. 1.

"Satan shall come forth to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to the war: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea."—REV. xx. 8.

"Having twelve gates . . . and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east were three gates; and on the north three gates; and on the south three gates; and on the west three gates."—REV. xxi. 12, 13.

"And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the midst of the street thereof. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, bearing twelve manner of fruits, yielding its fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."—REV. xxii. 1, 2.

all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof . . . Go ye through the city after him and smite, but come not near any man on whom is the mark."—EZEK. ix. 4, 6.

"And he said unto me, Son of man, eat this roll . . . So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat the roll. And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it, and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness."—EZEK. iii. 1-3.

"And there was a man . . . with a line of flax in his hand and a measuring reed."—EZEK. xl. 3.¹

"Son of man, set thy face toward Gog, of the land of Magog. . . Thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy hordes, and many peoples with thee."—EZEK. xxxviii. 1, 9.

"And the gates of the city shall be after the names of the tribes of Israel; three gates northward . . . and at the east side . . . three gates . . . and at the south side . . . three gates . . . and at the west side . . . three gates."—EZEK. xlviii. 31-34.

"And he brought me back to the door of the house, and behold waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward. . . . And by the river upon the back thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow every tree for meat . . . it shall bring forth new fruit every month . . . and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for healing."—EZEK. xlvii. 1, 12.

¹ See also Zechariah ii. 1, 2. The reference in Ezekiel is clearly to the measurement of the Temple.

There are also marked resemblances to the prophecies of Zechariah. The four horsemen in the vision at the opening of the first four seals, the two witnesses who are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth, and the description of the woman sitting upon the scarlet-coloured beast, bear a close resemblance to the visions found in the prophecies of Zechariah. The seven golden candlesticks resemble the seven-branched candlestick which Zechariah saw in vision (Rev. i. 12 ; Zech. iv. 2). We sub-join a list of the most remarkable resemblances.

"Every eye shall see Him, and they which pierced Him."—REV. i. 7.

"And I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat thereon had a bow. . . . And another horse came forth, a red horse. . . . And I saw, and behold a black horse. . . . And I saw and behold a pale horse."—REV. vi. 2-8.

"And I will give unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy . . . These are the two olive-trees and the two candlesticks standing before the Lord of the earth."—REV. xi. 3, 4.

"And they gathered them together unto the place which is called in Hebrew Har-Magedon."—REV. xvi. 16.

"And I saw a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy."—REV. xvii. 3.

"They shall look unto Me whom they have pierced."—ZECH. xii. 10.

"And in the first chariot were red horses ; and in the second chariot black horses ; and in the third chariot white horses ; and in the fourth chariot grisled bay horses."—ZECH. vi. 2, 3.

"What are these two olive-trees upon the right side of the candlestick and upon the left side thereof ? . . . These are the two sons of oil, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."—ZECH. iv. 11, 14.

"In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon."—ZECH. xii. 11.

"This is a woman sitting in the midst of the ephah. And he said, This is Wickedness."—ZECH. v. 7, 8.¹

But besides these apocalyptic books of the Old Testament, from which the visions and symbols are taken,

¹ On the resemblance between the woman in the Apocalypse and the woman in Zechariah see Wordsworth's *Hulsean Lectures*, pp. 405, 406.

and where the resemblances are clear and unmistakable, there are other prophetic books, the visions contained in which are evidently referred to. For example, there are several references in the Apocalypse to the prophecies of Joel. Thus, at the opening of the sixth seal, we read that "there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood, and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth." Here there is a marked resemblance to the words of Joel: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."¹ The vision of the locusts issuing from the abyss with shapes like unto horses prepared for war, is similar to the locusts in the prophecy of Joel, the appearance of which was also as the appearance of horses.² And the announcement of the great harvest of the earth is expressed in language similar to that of Joel. In the Apocalypse we read: "Send forth thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe;" and in Joel: "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, tread ye; for the winepress is full, the fats overflow."³

The resemblances to the prophecies of Isaiah are also numerous. The vision of the glory of God in heaven bears a striking resemblance to the similar vision imparted to Isaiah. In both there is the threefold ascription of praise, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." The living creatures having each of them six wings answer to the

¹ Rev. vi. 12, compared with Joel ii. 31; iii. 15.

² Rev. ix. 3, 7, compared with Joel ii. 4.

³ Rev. xiv. 18, compared with Joel iii. 13.

seraphim, each of which also had six wings.¹ The blessedness of the redeemed is expressed in similar terms. In the Apocalypse we read: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike on them, nor any heat;" and in Isaiah: "They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them."² So also the description of the new heavens and the new earth has its counterpart in Isaiah: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, nor come to mind."³ And especially the glorious description of the New Jerusalem is expressed in both books in terms so similar that we are constrained to believe that the Apocalypse contains an adaptation of the language of Isaiah: "And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine upon it; for the glory of God did lighten it, . . . and the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it. And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day; and they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it, and there shall in no wise enter into it anything that is unclean." In similar terms does Isaiah predict the blessedness of God's people: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. . . . And nations shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. . . . Thy gates also shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the wealth of the nations. . . . The sun shall be no more

¹ Rev. iv. 8, compared with Isaiah vi. 2, 3.

² Rev. vii. 16, compared with Isaiah xlix. 10.

³ Rev. xxi. 1, compared with Isaiah lxv. 17.

thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light. . . . Thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land for ever.”¹

It has been observed that there is a striking resemblance between the Apocalypse and the eschatological discourse of our Lord in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew.² The resemblance, however, is not so marked as is that to the apocalyptic books of the Old Testament, and is chiefly confined to the sixth chapter. The incidents occurring at the opening of the seven seals remind us of the words of our Lord: “Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom (war, second seal), and there shall be famines (third seal), and pestilences (fourth seal), and earthquakes in divers places (sixth seal). All these are the beginning of travail. Then shall they deliver you up unto tribulation, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for My name’s sake (persecution, fifth seal). . . . And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations (first seal), and then shall the end come.”³ In the Apocalypse the judgments of God are described as convulsions in the heavenly bodies. “And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood, and the stars of the heaven fell unto the earth.” And the same illustration is employed by our Lord: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall

¹ Rev. xxi. 23-27, compared with Isaiah lx. 1, 3, 11, 19, 21.

² Milligan’s *Baird Lectures*, pp. 42-58.

³ Matt. xxiv. 7-9, 14. See Gode’s *Biblical Studies*, pp. 308, 309.

fall from heaven.”¹ And so also the prediction of Antichrist, and especially of the false prophet who doeth great signs, so that he deceiveth them that dwell upon the earth, is analogous to what our Saviour tells us in His eschatological discourse: “There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.”²

¹ Rev. vi. 12, 13, compared with Matt. xxiv. 29.

² Rev. xiii. 14, compared with Matt. xxiv. 24.

DISSERTATION II.

SYSTEMS OF INTERPRETATION.

PROFESSOR HARNACK makes the extraordinary assertion that the Apocalypse is the most intelligible book of the New Testament. His words are: "The book of the New Testament called the Revelation of John, so long passed for the most obscure and difficult document of early Christianity, that scholars hesitated to apply to it the historico-critical method of investigation. Since this hesitation has been overcome, it appears that the matter of the book is neither obscure nor mysterious, although many special points still remain to be cleared up. Without being paradoxical, we may affirm that the Apocalypse is the most intelligible book of the New Testament."¹ Of course this assertion proceeds on Harnack's assumption that the Apocalypse is an anonymous writing, based on the legend that Nero was to appear, and, with the assistance of the Parthians, regain possession of the imperial throne; though, even on this assumption, the assertion of its intelligibility is not borne out by an examination of its contents. But on the assumption that the Apocalypse is the genuine work of the Apostle John, this assertion is at once extravagant and false; we have every reason for affirming the direct

¹ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article "Revelation."

opposite, namely, that the Apocalypse of John is the most obscure and enigmatical book of the New Testament; that its meaning is concealed under a veil of mystery, and that this veil, though often attempted to be removed, has unto this day never been uplifted. The expositions which have been advanced are very numerous;¹ no book of Scripture has been more commented on; the fact that it professes to be a revelation of the future has excited human curiosity, and its mystic visions have afforded matter for the ingenuity of those who seek to penetrate into the mysteries of futurity. These expositions have not only been numerous, but so discordant that not two of them agree on all points; the most different meanings have been attached to the apocalyptic scenes and visions. The language of the book is highly symbolical, and the rules for symbolical interpretation have not as yet been properly determined. And if the greater part of the prophecy remains unfulfilled, of course its meaning must to some extent at least be undiscoverable; for, as Irenæus justly remarks, "Every prophecy before its fulfilment is to men full of enigmas and ambiguities."² In short, notwithstanding the numerous treatises which have been written, the true meaning of the Apocalypse has not yet been discovered; it is a cryptogram of which the key has not been found.

Some critics deny that the Apocalypse is a prophecy at all. They regard it either as having reference to

¹ "The number of the expositions of the Apocalypse," observes Godet, "is almost past calculation."—*Biblical Studies*, p. 341. A list of these expositions is given by Professor Warfield in Schaff's *Encyclopædia of Biblical Theology*, vol. iii. pp. 2037, 2038.

² Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, iv. 26, 1.

events which were already past at the time when the author wrote, or as a poetical work not intended to be rigidly interpreted. Some affirm that it is a statement, couched in apocalyptic language, of the condition of the world and of the occurrences at the time of its composition, without any reference to the future. Grotius supposes that the whole Apocalypse, as far as chap. xi., refers to the affairs of the Jews, and as far as chap. xx., to the affairs of the Romans from the reign of Claudius to that of Vespasian, and after that as far as the end, to the flourishing state of the Church.¹ Eichhorn supposes it to be a sacred drama, somewhat similar to the Song of Solomon, and not intended to be a prediction; the prophetic element being the mere garb with which the drama is clothed.² And Dr. Davidson, in the early edition of his *Introduction to the New Testament*, and in his article on the Revelation in Kitto's *Cyclopædia*, supposes it to be a poem which has little reference to any future occurrences, except the broad fact of the second coming of Christ. "The book," he observes, "may be called a prophetic poem. As the predictions of the Hebrew prophets were generally written in the poetical style, so those of John, the only one of the Apostles who claims the name of prophet in the old sense, are essentially poetical. . . . If the book be a prophetic poem, its descriptions are of a general character, expressive only of the nature

¹ "Pertinent hæc visa ad res Judæorum usque ad finem cap. xi.; inde ad res Romanorum usque ad finem cap. xx.; deinde ad statum florentissimum Ecclesiæ ad finem usque."—*Comm. on Cap. IV.* Hammond and Le Clerc follow Grotius.

² *Einleitung in das N. T.*, vol. ii. p. 334. ;

and magnitude of the subject. Great exactness and a formal display of minute circumstances should not be looked for in them. The imagery is varied and copious, well fitted to strike and impress the reader's mind; but it should always be remembered that it is poetic imagery. It appears to us very unlikely that the history of the universal Church is depicted."¹ Of course, if this is the case, if the predictive element is eliminated or reduced to an infinitesimal quantity, the Apocalypse loses all the value which the Church has hitherto attached to it, and sinks to the level of a fantastic writing. This idea, however, cannot be accepted, as it is in direct contradiction with the declarations of the book itself.

Some general rules on which the interpretation of the Revelation must proceed may be given, which, though they may not be sufficient to solve the problem, may at least save us from error and extravagance. 1. The predictive character of the Revelation must be maintained. The book professes to be a revelation of the future: it is the only prophetic book of the New Testament. It is "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show unto His servants, even the things which must shortly come to pass" (Rev. i. 1). This essential element must not be lost sight of; whatever other uses the Apocalypse may be intended to subserve, it must be regarded as prophetic—a revelation of the future. 2. The Revelation must be interpreted according to the analogy of the apocalyptic portions of the Old Testa-

¹ Davidson's *Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. iii. p. 627; Kitto's *Cyclopædia*, article "Revelation;" see also Davidson's *Introduction to the Study of the New Testament*, vol. ii. p. 281 ff.

ment. We have already seen that it is formed after the model of the apocalyptic writings of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Zechariah : the same symbols, the same mystic numbers, the same visions occur. The careful study of the apocalyptic symbols of the Old Testament therefore forms the key for the understanding of the symbols of the Apocalypse. The beasts of the Apocalypse, for example, must, as regards their symbolical meaning, bear a resemblance to the similar beasts mentioned in the Book of Daniel ; and the four living creatures must resemble the four cherubim of Ezekiel. 3. We must investigate the rules of symbolical interpretation. This is a department of hermeneutics which has been too little examined.¹ Some of the symbols are explained in the Apocalypse itself ; the seven stars are the seven Churches ; the mystic Babylon is Rome, that ruleth over the kings of the earth ; the waters, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues (Rev. i. 20 ; xvii. 18, 15) ; and the meaning of other symbols may be discovered by referring to the sense in which they are used in the Old Testament.² So also the mystic numbers, especially three, four, seven, and twelve, have all their meaning.³ The earth and the sea have each their symbolical interpretation. According to most expositors, the woman who gives birth to the man-child is an emblem of the true Church, and the woman seated on the scarlet-coloured beast the emblem of the Church in

¹ See Davison *On Prophecy* ; Fairbairn's *Hermeneutics*.

² See, for a list of symbols which have been explained, Lee's Commentary on the Revelation in the *Speaker's Bible*, vol. iv. pp. 468-472.

³ On symbolical numbers, see Lee's *Commentary*, pp. 472-486 ; Moses Stuart *On the Apocalypse*, p. 101 ff., "Numerosity of the Apocalypse."

a state of degeneracy.¹ So far as the meaning of these symbols can be discovered, they must be consistently carried out. 4. The general scope and intention of the Apocalypse must always be borne in mind. It refers to the second advent of Christ. It is a prediction of the great conflict between good and evil, of the signs which shall precede the advent, of the final victory of Christ, and of the everlasting establishment of His kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. The book opens with the announcement, "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him;" and it closes with the declaration, "Behold, I come quickly" (Rev. i. 7, xxii. 12). 5. It has been laid down as a rule of interpretation that the Apocalypse should be interpreted with reference to our Lord's prophetic discourse.² That discourse embraced not only the destruction of Jerusalem, but the signs which shall precede the coming of the Son of Man and the end of the world. These signs of the advent, wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, according to our Lord's discourse, are repeated in the Book of Revelation. The one discourse is the revelation of Christ given when in this world; the other the revelation of Christ given after His ascension into heaven: in both cases the Speaker is the same.

It is impossible to give a strict classification of the various systems of interpretation: one system runs into another, so that it is difficult to assign the views of an interpreter to any particular system. We can only advert to the best-known systems of interpretation.

¹ On this point see Alford, *in loco*, and Auberlen, Rev. xii. 1, 2; xvii. 3.

² See Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iv., Prolegomena, pp. 249, 252.

These are four: the Præterist, the Historical, the Futurist, and the Spiritual.¹

I. According to the Præterist, the Apocalypse has already received its fulfilment, or rather realised its meaning; the key to its interpretation is to be found in the history of the past. This system, with various modifications, has been adopted by Hug, Ewald, De Wette, Lücke, Bleek, Moses Stuart, Volkmar, Reuss, Renan, Krenkel, Düsterdieck, Weizäcker, Weiss, Frederick Maurice, and Farrar.²

The opinions of those who affirm that the predictions of the Apocalypse have already been accomplished admit of considerable variety. Some regard the Apocalypse in the fullest sense of the term as a prophecy extending from the time that the Apostle wrote to the establishment of Christianity under Constantine, at which period the Millennium commenced. Others suppose that the Apocalypse relates entirely to the events which happened or which were expected to happen in the Apostle's day; he does not see beyond his own horizon. According to them, the references are entirely to the destruction of Jerusalem and the then condition of the Roman Empire. The denunciations in the book have regard to the expected destruction of pagan and persecuting Rome. The

¹ The ordinary German classification of systems of interpretation is as follows:—*Zeitgeschichtlich* = Præterist; *Kirchengeschichtlich* = Historical; *Endgeschichtlich* = Futurist; *Reichgeschichtlich* = Spiritual.

² Hug's *Introduction to New Testament*; Ewald's *Die Johann. Schriften*, vol. ii.; De Wette's *Offenbarung Johan.*; Lücke's *Offenbarung*; Bleek's *Lectures on the Apocalypse*; Moses Stuart's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*; Volkmar's *Offenbarung Johannes*; Reuss, *L'Apocalypse*; Renan's *L'Antichrist*; Krenkel's *Der Apostel Johannes*; Düsterdieck's *Offenbarung Johannes*; Weizäcker, *Das Apostolische Zeitalter*; Weiss, *Einleitung in das N. T.*; Farrar's *Early Days of Christianity*; Maurice *On the Apocalypse*.

book, it is asserted, was written during the course of the Jewish war. The Romans were to conquer Jerusalem, but the Temple and the altar were to be preserved.¹ The beast which came out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns (Rev. xiii. 1) was Nero, who, according to the popular opinion of those times, and which opinion the author adopted, was not really dead, but would again appear. The kings of the East and the horsemen (Rev. xvi. 12 ; ix. 9) were the Parthians, by whose aid Nero would be restored to his kingdom. Nero was to reign as Antichrist for three years and a half, to destroy Rome, to establish a universal monarchy, and to persecute the Christians. According to Archdeacon Farrar, the Nero legend is the key to the understanding of the book.² It is unnecessary to state this theory at length, as we have already adverted to it in discussing the date of the Apocalypse.

But whilst among those interpreters, who adopt the præterist view, there is a unanimous consent of opinion that the first beast who arose out of the sea is Nero revived as if from the dead, the greatest diversity of opinion prevails regarding the second beast. "And I saw another beast coming up out of the earth ; and he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight" (Rev. xiii. 11, 12). There is no contemporary historical character, no second Nero, to whom this description can with any show of plausibility apply. Accordingly, the most extraordinary meanings have

¹ Thus Rev. xi. 1, 2, is interpreted.

² *Expositor*, vol. i., second series, p. 335.

been attached to this vision. Some (Volkmar) conceive the second beast to be the Apostle Paul;¹ others (Farrar), Vespasian;² others, Titus; others (Krenkel), Josephus; others, Tiberius Alexander; others (De Wette), the Roman augural system; others (Reville), Simon Magus; others (Weizäcker), the worship of Cæsar, with its idolatry and charlatanry.³ All that is related in the book must be brought into correspondence with the history or legends of the time in which John lived.

It is not denied that there are in the Apocalypse references to the existing state of matters when John wrote the book. The persecutions which the Church suffered under Nero or Domitian are probably adverted to (Rev. vi. 9-11); but it is most erroneous to suppose that the whole Apocalypse was limited in its predictions to the then present and immediate future. According to that system the Apocalypse contains no prophecy, but merely a symbolical description of the age in which the author lived and wrote; the book is reduced to the same rank and level with the Book of Enoch, the Assumption of Moses, the Apocalypse of Baruch, and other apocalyptic Jewish works. Nay, the whole Revelation of John is founded on a gross error and extravagant legend about Nero. The events which within a few years occurred falsified all the predictions advanced. The Temple was not preserved, but destroyed by the Romans. Nero did not appear and destroy Rome; on the contrary, the Roman Empire under the Flavian dynasty was

¹ Volkmar's *Offenbarung*, pp. 205-208.

² Farrar's *Early Days of Christianity*, vol. ii. p. 301 ff.; *Expositor*, second series, vol. ii. p. 161 ff., "The False Prophet of the Apocalypse."

³ Weizäcker, *Apoc. Zeitalt.*, p. 515.

established on a firmer foundation. The Parthians did not at that time invade the Roman Empire. As Lücke is constrained to confess, "The prophecy was not fulfilled in its original sense, and will never be fulfilled in such a sense."¹ A book containing predictions which events so quickly falsified could not possibly have so far imposed upon the Church as to be considered a Divine prophecy, and be so highly esteemed as to be regarded as an inspired writing, and attributed to the Apostle John. Much less could it have been written by the inspired Apostle, especially by him who is the author of the Fourth Gospel. Certain it is that no such idea as the Nero legend is to be found in the writings of the Fathers in connection with the Apocalypse. "This theory," observes Dr. Marcus Dods, "involves the enormous assumption that a book which had predicted the return of Nero as eighth emperor, his destruction of Rome, the taking of Jerusalem, but preservation of the Temple, and which in all these particulars was falsified almost as soon as published, was yet accepted by the Church as inspired and apostolic."²

¹ Quoted by Auberlen, *Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 389.

² *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 242. As Professor Salmon well puts it:—"According to this theory, John does not, like some pretenders to the gift of prophecy, make himself pretty safe by postponing to some tolerably distant future the date when his prophecy is to come to pass. He undertakes boldly to foretell the event of the great military operation of his time. For a parallel case we should imagine Victor Hugo or some other French prophet, in Christmas 1870, issuing a prediction that Paris should to a certain extent be taken, and a third part of the city burnt, but that the Germans should not get the mastery over the whole, for that there would be an uprising of the other German nations against the Prussians, along with the total destruction of the city of Berlin, to the great joy of Europe. We can imagine some one mad enough to make such a prophecy as this; but if so, can we imagine that a prediction so wild and

II. The system of interpretation called the Historical or the Continuous-Historical, and which supposes that the Apocalypse contains a prophetic history of the Christian Church, is the one which was formerly generally adopted by Protestants. Its principal advocates are Bengel, Vitringa, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Hengstenberg, Davison, Gaussen, Elliott, Keith, Bickersteth, Birks, and Bishop Wordsworth.¹

According to this system, the Apocalypse is really what in the opinion of these critics it professes to be—a revelation of the future history of the Church of Christ. Future events are described in mystic terms and symbolical visions. Two different views of the prophecy are taken. Some suppose that the Apocalypse is a regularly progressive narrative of events in the history of the Church from the time that John wrote in the reign of Domitian down to the consummation of all things; whilst others think that the descriptions are synchronous—that the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials recapitulate the same events under different aspects.² According to the historical system of interpretation, we are living in the great scheme of prophecy; a considerable part of the Apocalypse has been fulfilled

so unfortunate should make the reputation of the prophet, and that the book which contained it should live for generations as an inspired document?"—*Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 292, 293.

¹ Bengel and Vitringa's *Commentaries*; Sir Isaac Newton *On Prophecy*; Bishop Newton's *Works*; Hengstenberg, *Die Offenbarung Johan.*; Davison *On Prophecy*; Gaussen, *Daniel le Prophète*; Elliott's *Horæ Apocalyptice*; Keith *On Prophecy*; Bickersteth and Birks's various writings; Wordsworth's *Hulsean Lectures* for 1849, and *Greek Testament*.

² According to Düsterdieck, this theory was made famous by Augustine and developed by Vitringa, and is held in a modified form by Hofmann and Hengstenberg.

since the Apostle wrote; a great part yet remains to be accomplished. Most of these interpreters suppose that the most important facts in the history of the Church and of the world, such as the downfall of the Pagan Roman Empire, the establishment of Christianity under Constantine, the rise and the corruptions of Popery, the spread of Mahometanism, and the excesses of the French Revolution, are here foretold.

It would be impossible to give anything like a sketch of the principal theories of those who adopt the historical system of interpretation. We can only mention the most noted, without entering into details. Bengel, illustrious for his erudition, his exquisite felicity of expression, and his piety, was among the first who gave a detailed account of the Apocalypse, following the course of history. He supposed the Apocalypse to be a prediction of the corruption of Popery, and by a complicated process of calculation he came to the conclusion that the Millennium would commence in the year 1836. "Should," he says, "the year 1836 pass without bringing remarkable changes, there must be some error in my calculation."¹ Hengstenberg, who, however, may be almost classed among the Præterists, understands by the woman who gave birth to the man-child, "the one inseparable Church of the old and new covenants." He interprets the beast coming out of the sea as the world-power opposed to Christ; the seven heads are seven kingdoms or powers; the five which are fallen are the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, and Grecian

¹ For a statement of Bengel's system of interpretation, see Auberlen's *Daniel and the Revelation*, pp. 365 ff.

empires; the sixth, which then was, is the Roman empire; and the seventh, which was yet to come, is the German empire. "The commencement of the millennial kingdom," he observes, "coincides with the Christianisation of the Germanic nations, and the Millennium itself is identical with the German empire, which lasted a thousand years." The loosing again of Satan refers to our present time, especially since the year 1848, the period of Gog and Magog, in which we are living.¹ Elliott, in his *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, for long considered the most learned and masterly exposition of the Apocalypse in modern times, gives a minute account of the different visions from an anti-Papal standpoint. The woman is the true Church, and the dragon who persecutes her is the Pagan Roman Empire. The man-child whom she bears is Constantine and his successors. The beast rising out of the sea is identical with the dragon; the seven heads are the seven forms which the government of Rome assumed; ² the eighth head is the Papal power or Antichrist, identical with the little horn in Daniel's vision, and with the man of sin in Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians; the ten horns are the ten nations which arose out of the ruins of the Roman Empire; the second beast, with its form as a lamb and its voice as a dragon, identical with the false prophet, is "the papal clergy united under the Pope in his ecclesiastical character of the Western patriarch, and acting so as to support him in

¹ Hengstenberg's *Commentary on the Apocalypse*. For a succinct sketch of his views see Auberlen's *Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 409, and Bleek's *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, p. 67.

² Elliott's *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, vol. iii. p. 98, 2nd edit. These seven forms are kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, military tribunes, emperors, and the new imperial form introduced by Diocletian.

his different and far loftier character of Christ's Vicar on earth, or Antichrist;"¹ the first five vials are the excesses of the French Revolution and the conquests of Napoleon.

Such an attempt to ascribe to the Apocalypse a continuous prophetical history is natural, and apparently in accordance with the nature of the book, but it has led to the most extravagant assumptions. The views expressed by these interpreters are discordant; they are always contradicting and correcting each other; scarcely two of them agree in the meaning of any particular vision, and this discordance of opinion destroys our reliance on the soundness of this method of interpretation. "How," asks Godet, "can we feel any confidence in this method of interpretation when we see, for instance, one and the same vision—that of the locusts with the tail of a scorpion—interpreted by some of the Arabian invasion of the seventh century; by others of the incursion of the Persians under Chosroes; by a third party of the introduction of the Talmud among the Jews; and by others again of the establishment of monasticism? Is not the arbitrariness which gives birth to such a method of interpretation most glaring? and can we help asking ourselves what object the Holy Spirit could have had in view in writing, according to the malicious expression of Réville, 'a history of the Church in riddles.'" ² Besides, whilst they assert that much of the Apocalypse has received its fulfilment, yet this does not render the prediction clearer. In this case the fulfilment of prophecy

¹ *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, vol. iii. p. 160.

² Godet's *Biblical Studies*, p. 358.

cannot be adduced as an argument either to convince gainsayers or to confirm the faith of the believer. We cannot bring forward the predictions of the corruptions of Popery or of the excesses of the French Revolution in the Apocalypse, in the same manner and with the same force as we bring forward the Messianic predictions of the Old Testament.¹ The resemblance between the prediction and its fulfilment is by no means so clear as to convince the intelligent doubter. Sometimes also the most trifling and transient events are supposed to be referred to; as, for example, the long hair and turbans of the Saracens, the horse-tails worn by the Turkish pashas, and the three frogs in the old arms of France.² On the other hand, events of the greatest importance in the history of the Church and of the world are omitted in the Apocalypse, as the future of the great Eastern Church, the discovery of America, the invention of printing, the conversion of the heathen. An inspired prophecy, purporting to give a history of the Christian Church, would hardly have omitted events which had such an important influence upon its destiny.

III. The Futurists take the opposite view to the Præterists; they regard the predictions of the Apocalypse as still unfulfilled. This system has not many supporters; it has been embraced by Dr. Maitland,

¹ "We point the infidel," says Maitland, "to the captive Jew and the wandering Arab; but who challenges him with the slain witnesses? We set before him the predicted triumphs of Cyrus; but do we expect his conversion from the French Revolution and the conquests of Napoleon? We send him to muse on the ruined city of David, and to search for the desolate site of Babylon; but who builds his argument on the opened seals of the Apocalypse?"—*First Enquiry*, p. 71.

² Elliott's *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, passim.

Dr. Todd, Mr. Burgh, R. W. Newton, and Isaac Williams.¹

According to the Futurists, the whole Apocalypse, with the exception of the epistles to the Seven Churches, has yet to be fulfilled: it belongs to the domain of unfulfilled prophecy; and therefore all attempts to discover its meaning from the past history of the Church are visionary and vain. The book is a prediction of the second coming of the Lord, and the whole prophecy has reference exclusively to that event. It states the signs which will herald the Parousia. "We are," observes Dr. Todd, "to look for the fulfilment of its predictions neither in the early persecutions and heresies of the Church, nor in the long series of centuries from the first preaching of the Gospel until now, but in the events which are immediately to precede, to accompany, and to follow the second advent of our Lord and Saviour."² Those who adopt this system give a literal interpretation to the Apocalypse, and overlook in a great measure its symbolical character. The times stated—the three days and a half and the forty and two months—are to be understood literally. The temple is the Temple of Jerusalem, which is to be rebuilt and its worship restored. Mount Zion, on which the Lamb stands, is the mount in Jerusalem on which Christ is to appear at the second advent and erect His throne. Some even go the length of asserting

¹ Maitland's *The Apostles' School of Prophetic Interpretation*; Todd, *Six Discourses on the Apocalypse*; Burgh, *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*; Newton, *Thoughts on the Revelation*; William's *Enquiry*, &c.; also in a modified form by Klieforth, *Erklärung*, &c.

² *Discourses on the Apocalypse*, p. 68.

that Babylon is not to be taken as a figurative designation of Rome, but literally for the city on the Euphrates. Those who adopt this system are believers in the personal reign of Christ and in the resurrection of the saints at the Millennium.

This system gives prominence to the advent of Christ as the great theme of the Apocalypse, and so far is correct. All the scenes and symbols and visions of the Apocalypse are the preparations for and the forerunners of the advent. But the whole history of the Christian Church from its commencement points to this event as the great climax ; all lead up to that fulness of time when Christ shall again appear. This system of interpretation deprives the book of much of its present use. According to this theory, it is a book of the future, not of the present. Besides, it is evident that the Apocalypse does not refer only to the distant future ; it refers to the near, as well as to the remote. It professes to be a revelation of the things which must shortly come to pass ; a blessing is pronounced on those who hear and read the words of this prophecy, because the time is at hand ; the Lord God sent His angel to show unto His servant the things which must shortly be done ; John is commanded not to seal the sayings of the prophecy of this book, for the time is at hand ; and He which testifieth these things saith, "Surely I come quickly" (Rev. i. 1, 3 ; xxii. 6, 10, 20). Besides, the extreme literalism which this system of interpretation involves leads to the most fanciful and extravagant suppositions. The whole facts adverted to in the Apocalypse until the commencement of the

Millennium and the personal reign of Christ are crowded into a short space of time.

IV. The fourth system of interpretation is that which gives to the Apocalypse a spiritual meaning. According to this view, the Apocalypse is not a professed detailed history of the future, but only a conspectus of the great epochs and of the governing principles in the development of the kingdom of God in its relation to the kingdoms of this world. This view of the Apocalypse is comparatively modern, but is perhaps in our days the most prevalent opinion among those who do not adopt the rationalistic interpretation. It has been embraced by Archdeacon Lee, Bishop Boyd Carpenter, Vaughan, Randall, Milligan, Warfield, and Simcox;¹ and to these may be added Alford, Ebrard, Hofmann, Auberlen, and Godet,² who have more or less adhered to this system.

According to this system, the Apocalypse has reference to all times. The particular visions do not receive single and definite fulfilments, but may be fulfilled at different times; they have, as Lord Bacon observes, "springing and germinant developments." For example, the apocalyptic beasts do not exclusively denote Rome, either Pagan or Papal, but generally the enemies of Christ—the world-power throughout all ages opposed

¹ Archdeacon Lee's *Commentary in the Speaker's Commentary*; Bishop Boyd Carpenter *On the Revelation*; Vaughan's *Practical Commentary*; Randall, *Introduction to the Revelation in the Pulpit Commentary*; Milligan, *Baird Lectures* for 1885, and *Exposition of the Apocalypse*; Warfield in Schaff's *Encyclopædia*, art. "Revelation;" Simcox *On the Revelation of St. John*.

² Alford's *Greek Testament*; Ebrard *On the Revelation* in Olshausen's series; Hofmann's *Schriftbeweiss*, and *Weissagung und Erfüllung*; Auberlen, *Daniel and the Revelation*; Godet's *Biblical Studies*.

to Christ. The whole book refers to the great conflict between good and evil, between the Church and the Devil, between Christ and Antichrist, carried on in all ages. The revelations contain the disclosures of what happen at all times in the history of the Church; the predictions admit of a variety of applications. The book is designed to teach us the spiritual history of the Church of Christ, to warn us of those spiritual dangers to which we are exposed, to inform us of the spiritual trials to which we are liable, to describe the great contest with evil, and to comfort us with the assurance of the final victory of Christ over all the powers of darkness, when the Devil and the false prophet will be cast out, and when Christ's people shall be saved and glorified. "The Book of Revelation," observes Ebrard, "does not contain presages of contingent, isolated events; but it contains warnings and consolatory prophecies concerning the great leading forces which make their appearance in the conflict between Christ and the enemy. So full are its contents, that every age may learn therefrom more and more against what disguises of the Serpent one has to guard oneself, and also how the afflicted Church at all times receives its measure of courage and consolation."¹

Those who adopt the general principles of this system differ greatly as to its details. Hofmann, who perhaps belongs rather to the Futurist class of interpreters, dwells much upon the great struggle between Christ and the Wicked One, which will become more and more violent until the Advent. The first beast is the world-power

¹ Ebrard's *Commentary on the Revelations*.

attacking the Church from without, and the second beast is heresy or false doctrine, attacking the Church from within. He understands Babylon to be Rome, and the seven kings to be not Roman emperors, but seven different forms of the world-power.¹ The great prototype of Antichrist is Antiochus Epiphanes, as declared in the Apocalypse of Daniel.² Godet, whilst he gives a spiritual interpretation to the Apocalypse, yet believes in a personal Antichrist, who shall be a Jewish Messiah set up by carnal Israel in opposition to the Messiah of God. "This personage will be an Israelite, who shall consent to that act of felony to which Jesus would not consent, that of doing homage to the sovereignty of the prince of this world, in order that he might receive from his hands universal empire."³ Alford, whilst he holds that particular predictions have been fulfilled at different times and in different ways, yet frequently gives to particular visions specific meanings. He regards the beast coming out of the sea as the secular power antagonistic to the Church of Christ; and the second beast as "the sacerdotal persecuting power leagued with, and the instrument of, the secular; professing to be a lamb, but in reality being a dragon; persecuting the saints of God; the inseparable companion and upholder of despotic and tyrannical power. This in all

¹ Namely, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Antiochus Epiphanes, the five who have fallen; Rome, the sixth, which now is; and the seventh, the German Empire. The eighth is Antichrist, or Antiochus Epiphanes returning from the abyss.

² *Weissagung und Erfüllung*. For Hofmann's view see Auberlen's *Daniel and the Revelations*, pp. 398-407; Bleek's *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, pp. 65, 66; Weiss' *Einleitung in das N. T.*, p. 367.

³ Godet's *Biblical Studies*, Essay upon the Apocalypse, p. 373.

its forms, Pagan, Papal, and in so far as the Reformed Churches have retrograded towards Papal sacerdotalism, Protestant also, I believe to be that which is symbolised under the second wild beast."¹

There is much truth in this system. The Apocalypse is certainly designed to support believers under all their trials and conflicts, with the assurance that the good shall finally prevail and that Christ shall overcome all His and our enemies. But the great objection to this system is that it leaves every one to interpret the book according to his own fancy; one can put into it any meaning he pleases, and thus prophecy becomes of private interpretation.² The most obvious statements are explained away. Thus we are expressly told that the woman seated on the scarlet-coloured beast is Rome. "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." "The woman whom thou sawest is the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" (Rev. xvii. 9, 18). No explanation can be clearer or more definite. Yet this has to be explained away, and other meanings besides Rome have to be attached to the vision.³ Besides, according to this view, the Apocalypse ceases in a great measure to be a prophecy, or at least the predictive element in it is obscured, although it is evident, from the express declarations of the book itself, that it is a revelation of the things that are to come to pass. "The Apocalypse,"

¹ Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iv., Prolegomena, p. 257.

² "No prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation" (2 Peter i. 20).

³ "That we are here to confine ourselves to Rome, either Papal or Pagan, or both, or that we are even to think primarily of them, as is done by different classes of historical interpreters, can hardly be admitted."—*Milligan*.

observes Professor Milligan, "contains no continuous history of the Church from the beginning to the end of her historical course. It is not a mere revelation of events that are immediately to precede the second coming of the Lord. It is no mere prophecy of the early doom of those enemies of Christian truth whom the Seer saw around him. The book is not predictive. It contains no prediction that is not found in the prophecies of Christ. It gives no knowledge of the future that is not given first by our Lord, and then by others of His inspired Apostles."¹ Dr. Milligan admits the book to be so far prophetic that it deals with great principles which may find many fulfilments, but he does not think that any of these special fulfilments were in the mind of the sacred writer.² Certainly, if this is the case, the Christian Church has been mistaken from the beginning; for however diverse may have been the meanings given to this mystic book, the Church in general has always regarded it as prophetic—a prophecy of the future of the Church in its relation to the world. Our inability to understand its meaning, and the glaring mistakes in interpretation which have been made, do not deprive it of its predictive character.

¹ *Baird Lectures* for 1885, pp. 187, 188; see also Auberlen, *Der Prophet Daniel und die Offenbarung Johannis*, as the chief German exponent of this system of interpretation.

² No writer in recent times has expended so much time and thought on the Revelation as Dr. Milligan. His views, as detailed in his *Baird Lectures*, in his Commentary on the Apocalypse in Schaff's *Popular Commentary of the New Testament*, in his recent exposition of the Book of Revelation in the *Expositor's Bible*, and in numerous articles in the *Expositor*, merit careful consideration, as the opinions of an accomplished theologian.

DISSERTATION III.

THE MILLENNIUM.

LITERATURE.—The chief works on the Millennium are the following:—Joseph Mede, *Clavis Apocalyptica*, 1627; Bengel's *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*, 1742; Bishop Newton's *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, 1751; Corrodi, *Geschichte des Chiliasmus*; Urwick, *Second Advent of Christ*, 1839; Elliott's *Horæ Apocalyptice*, 2nd edit. 1846, 5th edit. 1862; Wordsworth's *Hulsean Lectures* for 1848; Brown on *The Second Advent*, 1846; Bickersteth's *Glory of the Church*; Cumming's *Apocalyptic Sketches*, 1849; Molyneux's *Israel's Future and The World to Come*; Bleek's *Lectures on the Apocalypse*; Waldegrave's *New Testament Millenarianism*, *Bampton Lectures*, 1855; Auberlen, *Daniel und die Offenbarung Johannis*, translated 1856; Koch, *Das tausendjährige Reich*, 1860; Archdeacon Lee on the Revelation in the *Speaker's Commentary*, *Excursus on the Millennium*, pp. 808–814; Milligan, *Bampton Lectures* for 1885, and *Exposition of the Book of Revelation*; Bishop Boyd Carpenter on the Revelation in Bishop Ellicott's *Commentary*; article on Chiliasm by Semisch in *Herzog's Real-Encyklopädie*.

No department of exegesis is more difficult than the interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy. The language in which prophecy, especially apocalyptic prophecy, is couched is generally highly figurative. Spiritual realities are represented by images taken from the material world; kings and kingdoms are figured by the hieroglyphic pictures of animals; and the rise and fall of dynasties are described by variations in the heavenly bodies. The fulfilment is in general the only key to

the interpretation ; without this, prophecy is necessarily obscure. Hence, if we endeavour to interpret an unfulfilled prophecy with any degree of minuteness, it is almost certain that we shall fall into extravagance and error ; we can only judge what is its general import, and even then our judgment is frequently only a conjecture. We have a signal example of this uncertainty of exposition in the Jewish interpretation of their Messianic prophecies. The Jews in their Scriptures had numerous and varied prophecies concerning the Messiah ; and yet we know from history how mistaken they were in their interpretation of these prophecies. They interpreted what was meant to be figurative and spiritual as if it were literal ; and instead of a suffering Messiah, they expected a mighty Conqueror, who should free them from bondage, oppression, and wrong, sit on the throne of David, and restore to them the palmy days of Solomon. The event showed how opposed the fulfilment was to their interpretation ; how greatly they mistook the nature of the prophecy.¹ This notable instance certainly rebukes all dogmatism in the announcement of our peculiar views, and should teach us caution and modesty in our study of unfulfilled prophecy.

The notion of a millennium (*mille anni*) or Chilia-sm (*χίλια ἔτη*) is not peculiar to Christianity. Traces of it are to be found in heathen writers who lived before the

¹ And yet, according to certain writers, the Jews, in giving a literal interpretation to their prophecies, were not mistaken ; their error consisted in attending only to those prophecies which had reference to the pre-millennial advent, and overlooking those prophecies which referred to the first coming of the Messiah.

Christian era. The golden age among the heathen was in general placed in the distant past, but some looked forward to its return in the future history of the world. We find traces of this in the writings of Plato, especially in the *Phædrus* and in the *Republic*.¹ But especially the celebrated fourth eclogue of Virgil, whether the idea is taken from the Sibylline verses, or, as some think, from the prophecies of Isaiah, describes in glowing terms the future reign of peace and plenty.

The Jews also had their Millennium; their golden age was not placed, as it was by the heathen generally, in the past, but in the future; they looked forward to an era of national glory and bliss—the era of the Messiah. Different views are entertained by them as to its duration. Some supposed that the reign of the Messiah would be perpetual—that His kingdom would have no end;² and there is an allusion to this idea in the words of the Jews to Jesus: “We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth for ever” (John xii. 34). Others conceived that it would last only forty years, analogous to the forty years’ journey of the Israelites in the wilderness; and others, for four hundred years, being the length of their sojourn in Egypt.³ But, in general, the reign of the Messiah was regarded as lasting for a thousand years.⁴ They interpret the words of the Psalmist, “a thousand years are in Thy sight but as yesterday when it is past” (Ps. xc. 4), as a declaration

¹ *Phædrus*, 249 (Jowett’s trans., vol. i. p. 583); *De Republ.*, x. 615, 621 (Jowett’s trans., vol. ii. pp. 458, 464).

² Schürer gives as references Sibyll., iii. 76; Psalt. Sol., xvii. 4; Enoch, lxii. 14.

³ Talmud, Sanh., 99; 4 Esdras, vii. 28, 29.

⁴ Sanh., 77.

that a day of the Lord is equal to a thousand years. So also they regarded the Millennium as the sabbatical rest of the world. They considered the week of creation as if each day constituted a thousand years, and consequently the seventh day was the Millennium, or the Sabbath of creation. In the apocalyptic books of the Jews there are various references to this glorious future.¹ Thus in the Book of Enoch we read: "In those days the whole earth will be administered with justice, and will be planted with trees of blessing. And all the trees of desire will flourish, and the vine will bear fruit in abundance. And of the seed which is sown, one measure will bear ten thousand, and one measure of olives will produce ten presses of oil. . . . And all the children of men shall become righteous, and all nations shall praise and worship Me. And the earth will be cleansed from all corruption, and all sin, and all punishment, and all torment; and I will never again send a flood upon it, from generation to generation, to all eternity."² Similar statements are to be found in the Apocalypse of Baruch, to which we will afterwards have occasion to refer. So also in the rabbinical writings there are many references to the Millennium. Thus the Bereschith Rabba, as quoted by Whitby, makes the following statement: "If we expound the seventh day of the seventh Millennium, which is the world to come, the exposition is, 'He blessed it,' because that in the seventh Millennium all

¹ For a systematic presentation of the old Jewish doctrine of the Messianic reign, see Schürer, *Jewish People in the Times of Christ*, Division ii. vol. ii. pp. 154-187, English translation.

² *Das Buch Henoch*, x. 18-22; Dillmann's *Buch Enoch*, p. 6; Schodde, *The Book of Enoch*, p. 71.

souls shall be bound up in the bundle of life. So our Rabbins of blessed memory have said in their commentaries on 'God blessed the seventh day,' the Holy Ghost blessed the world to come, which beginneth in the seventh Millennium."¹ So also Rabbi Salomon writes: "It is fixed that the world shall stand for six thousand years, according to the number of the days of the week; but on the seventh day is the Sabbath, and during the seventh Millennium the world is at rest."²

In the Apocalypse we have a description of the Christian Millennium. After the destruction of Antichrist and the false prophet, a mighty angel shall descend from heaven, and shall lay hold on Satan, and confine him for a thousand years. During this long period his influence will be sensibly restrained; he shall not be permitted to deceive the nations; the world will become the abode of holiness and peace. The souls of the martyrs and of those who have not worshipped the beast will live and reign with Christ. At the close of the Millennium Satan will be loosed out of his prison; there will be a strong reaction in favour of impiety; he and his confederates will make war with the saints, and endeavour to wrest the kingdom out of their hands; but fire will come down from heaven and destroy them. After this shall follow the general resurrection and the judgment (Rev. xx.).

The idea of a millennial reign of Christ with His risen saints on earth was very prevalent among the Fathers of the second century; indeed, it might almost

¹ Whitby on Heb. iv. 9.

² Quoted by Archdeacon Lee, *Speaker's Commentary*, N. T., vol. iv. p. 809.

be considered to be at that period an adopted doctrine of the Christian Church. There is no reference to it in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.¹ The first reference is the following, from the apocryphal Epistle of Barnabas (A.D. 100?): "Attend to the meaning of the expression, 'He finished it in six days.' This implies that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for with Him one day is as a thousand years. Therefore in six days, that is in six thousand years, all things will be finished. But on the seventh day He rested. This meaneth, when His Son, coming, shall judge the ungodly, and shall change the sun and the moon and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day."² The millennial idea is here taken rather from the opinions of the Jews than from the Apocalypse. Papias (A.D. 120) may be considered as the originator of the patristic notion of the Millennium. Eusebius, who was evidently biassed against him on account of his millenarian views, observes that "he gives accounts which he received from unwritten traditions, and from certain strange parables of our Lord and of His doctrine, and other fabulous matters. In these he says there would be a certain Millennium after the resurrection, and that there would be a corporeal reign of Christ on this earth, which things he appears to have imagined, as if they were authorised by the apostolic narrations, not understanding those matters which they propounded mystically in their representations."³ Irenæus, however, formed a very different

¹ Unless, of course, the Epistle of Barnabas and the sayings of Papias be considered as among the writings of the Apostolic Fathers.

² Barnabas, *Ep.*, ch. xv.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 39.

opinion of Papias, and evidently embraced his Chiliastic views. He gives the following strange tradition, which Papias states that he heard from John, as to the eschatological teaching of our Lord: "The days will come in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each twig ten thousand shoots, and in each shoot ten thousand clusters, and in each cluster ten thousand grapes, and each grape when pressed will give five-and-twenty measures of wine."¹ Words very similar to these have been found in the Jewish Apocalypse of Baruch,² so that apparently Papias mistook the words of Baruch for a traditionary saying of Christ. Justin Martyr (A.D. 147) also adopted Chiliastic views. "I and others," he observes, "who are right-minded Christians, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare."³ And again in a passage already quoted: "There was a certain man with us whose name was John, one of the Apostles of Christ, who prophesied by a revelation that was made to him that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the

¹ Irenæus, *Adv. Hæres.*, v. 33, 3.

² See *supra*, p. 243. The words which Papias gives are found in chap. xxix. "Papias," observes Lee, "must plainly have borrowed from the 'Apocalypse of Baruch,' or both must have borrowed from an earlier writer." The following is the passage in Baruch: "The earth shall yield its fruits, one producing ten thousand, and in one vine shall be a thousand branches, and one branch shall produce a thousand bunches, and one bunch shall produce a thousand grapes, and one grape shall produce a measure of wine."—*Drummond's "Jewish Messiah,"* p. 349.

³ Justin Martyr, *Dial. cum Tryph.*, ch. lxxx.

general resurrection and judgment of all men would take place.”¹ He however observes: “There are many Christians of pure and devout minds who do not admit this.”² Irenæus (A.D. 180) was a decided Millennarian, and appears to have adopted the views of Papias, for whom he expresses a high regard.³ Tertullian (A.D. 200), after he became a Montanist, was an ardent supporter of Chiliastic views. “We confess,” says he, “that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem brought down from heaven. . . . After the thousand years are over, within which period is completed the resurrection of the saints, who rise sooner or later according to their deserts, then will ensue the destruction of the world and the conflagration of all things at the judgment.”⁴ And even as late as the beginning of the fourth century, Lactantius (A.D. 306) writes: “Since God, having finished His works, rested the seventh day and blessed it, at the end of the six thousandth year all wickedness must be abolished from the earth, and righteousness shall reign for a thousand years; and there will be tranquillity and rest from the labours which the world has long endured.”⁵ And in another place he writes: “The earth shall open its fruitfulness, and of its own accord produce fruits in abundance; the rocks shall drop with honey; streams of wine shall run down, and rivers with milk; the earth itself shall rejoice and all nature exult,

¹ Justin Martyr, *Dial. cum Tryph.*, chap. lxxxi.

² *Idem*, chap. lxxx.

⁴ Tertullian, *Adv. Marcion*, iii. 24.

³ Irenæus, *Adv. Hæres.*, v. 33.

⁵ Lactantius, *Instit.*, vii. 14.

being rescued and set free from the dominion of evil and impiety, from guilt and error.”¹

Chiliasm was also embraced by various heretical sects outside the Church. The Montanists, by reason of their rigidly literal interpretation of the Scriptures, were Chiliasts; they believed in the thousand years' reign of Christ with His saints. So also several of the Gnostic sects, especially those of Jewish origin, adopted Chiliastic views. Cerinthus taught a sensual Millennium. According to him, it was to consist of sensual pleasures and earthly delights, somewhat similar to the paradise of Mahomet. “Cerinthus,” observes Caius, “through revelations, written as he would have us to believe by a great apostle, brings before us marvellous things, which he pretends were shown him by angels, asserting that after the resurrection there would be an earthly kingdom of Christ, and that men dwelling in Jerusalem are again to be subject to desires and pleasures. Being also an enemy to the Divine Scriptures, and with a view to deceive men, he said that there would be a space of a thousand years for celebrating nuptial festivals.”² So also Dionysius of Alexandria observes: “One of the doctrines that Cerinthus taught was that Christ should have an earthly kingdom; and as he was a voluptuary and wholly sensual, he conjectured that it would consist in those things which he so eagerly desired, in the gratification of his sensual appetites, in eating, and drinking, and marrying.”³ Although we have only the opinions of Cerinthus as given by his opponents, yet there is no

¹ Lactantius, *Institut.*, vii. 24.

² Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, iii. 28, vii. 25.

³ *Idem*, vii. 25.

doubt that his Gnosticism was of a licentious character, and that the Millennium which he taught was a state of sensual pleasures.

The views held by the primitive Church varied. Some of the Fathers, as Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and the sect of the Montanists adopted a spiritual view of the Millennium; that Christ would reign on earth with His redeemed people for a thousand years; that righteousness, and peace, and truth would everywhere prevail; and that the world would be inhabited by holy beings. But, in general, the notion was sensuous—a Millennium of earthly prosperity and happiness; that during this period the saints would enjoy in abundance the good things of this world, fare deliciously, plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof. Such were the opinions of Papias and Lactantius, and still more degrading were those of the Jewish Gnostics. The effect of such a notion was prejudicial to the purity of the Church; it promoted among Christians, who were then oppressed with persecution, an ardent desire for worldly happiness; it held forth an earthly reward to comfort them amid their present sufferings, and it diverted their minds from spiritual religion and the enjoyment of God. “It fostered,” observes Neander, “among Christians the longing for a gross sensual happiness, incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel, and so among educated heathens gave birth to many a prejudice against Christianity.”¹

Although Chiliasm was prevalent in the Church, and was embraced by all the great Fathers of the second century, yet at the commencement of the third century

¹ Neander's *Church History*, vol. ii. p. 397, Bohm's edition.

there was a strong reaction against it. There were many causes for this reaction. The excesses of the Montanists, the gross perversions of the doctrine by the Gnostics, and the rise of the allegorical school of Alexandria, all contributed to discountenance Chiliasm. The first who wrote against it was Caius (A.D. 210); he especially directed his attacks against the sect of Cerinthus.¹ Origen (A.D. 230) condemns those who interpret Scripture in a Jewish sense.² But the great antagonist of Chiliasm was Dionysius of Alexandria (A.D. 250). Nepos, Bishop of Arsencœ in Egypt, had written a book advocating a somewhat sensuous Chiliasm, in opposition to the Alexandrian school, entitled "A Refutation of the Allegorists" (*Ἐλεγχος τῶν ἀλληγοριστῶν*), and had gained numerous adherents. After his death Dionysius opposed his views. He expresses the greatest respect for Nepos: "I greatly reverence the man on account of his faith and study of the Scriptures; but the truth is to be loved and honoured above all." And he so prevailed that he not only suppressed Chiliasm throughout Egypt, but effectually weakened its influence in the Church,³ for from that time it had few supporters among the Fathers.⁴ Augustine condemns it as fostering a sensuous Christianity. "This opinion," he observes, "would not be objectionable if it were believed that the joys of the saints shall be spiritual, and consequent on the presence of God, for I myself once held this opinion. But as they

¹ Caius appears to assert that the Book of Revelation, on which the Millenarians took their stand, was a fabrication of Cerinthus.

² Origen, *De Princip.*, ii. 11, 2.

³ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.*, vii. 24.

⁴ Neander's *Church History*, vol. ii. pp. 394-402, Bohn's edition.

assert that those who then rise again shall enjoy sensual and immoderate banquets of meat and wine, such as not only to shock the feelings of the temperate, but even to surpass the measure of credulity itself, such assertions can be believed only by the carnal.”¹

Augustine himself introduced into the Church an entirely new view of the Millennium. He conceived that it was not future, but present; that the Millennium commenced at the birth of Christ; in short, that it is the age of Christianity. To this view he was probably led by witnessing the triumph of Christianity in the Roman world. Heathenism was now abolished, and a Christian emperor sat on the throne of the Cæsars. “The devil,” he says, “is bound and shut up in the abyss, that he may not seduce the nations from which the Church is gathered, and which he formerly seduced before the Church existed.”² “The Church even now is the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of heaven. Even now His saints reign with Him, though otherwise than as they shall reign hereafter. . . . It is of this first resurrection in the present life that the Apocalypse speaks. For after saying that the devil is bound a thousand years, and is afterwards loosed for a short season, it goes on to give a sketch of what the Church does, or of what is done in the Church in those days, in the words, ‘And I saw seats, and them that sat upon them, and judgment was given.’ It is not to be supposed that this refers to the last judgment, but to the seats of the rulers and to the rulers themselves by whom the Church is now governed.”³

¹ Augustine, *Civ. Dei*, xx. 7.

² *Idem*, xx. 7.

³ *Idem*, xx. 9.

During the Middle Ages the doctrine of the Millennium was seldom adverted to. Those who were opposed to the hierarchical pretensions of the Papacy adopted Millenarian views, and looked forward to a period when Christ would appear and purify His Church. At the close of the year A.D. 1000 there was throughout all Mediæval Christendom a general expectation of the end of the world and the commencement of the reign of Christ with His saints.

At the Reformation the excesses of the Anabaptists in Munster, who adopted gross Millenarian views, and wished to establish a reign of the saints by a violent revolution, caused the Reformers strenuously to oppose Chiliasm. It was condemned by Calvin, Luther, Melancthon, and all the great leaders of the Reformation. "The error of the Millenarians," says Calvin, "is too puerile to deserve or require refutation. Nor does the Apocalypse give any countenance to them."¹ So also it was condemned in all the great ecclesiastical Confessions. "The Churches," says the Augsburg Confession, "teach that at the end of the world Christ will appear for judgment and will raise all the dead. . . . They condemn those who are now propagating Jewish opinions, that before the resurrection of the dead the saints shall occupy the kingdoms of the world, the wicked being everywhere suppressed."² The second Helvetic Confession declares, "We condemn besides the Jewish dreams that before

¹ Calvin's *Institutes*, iii. 25, 5.

² Article XVII. "Christus apparebit in consummatione mundi ad iudicandum, et mortuos omnes resuscitabit. . . . Damnant et alios qui nunc spargunt Judaicas opiniones, quod ante resurrectionem mortuorum pii regnum mundi occupaturi sint, ubique oppressis impiis."

the day of judgment there will be a future golden age on the earth, and the righteous will occupy the kingdoms of the world, their impious enemies being subdued.”¹ So also the Church of England in the reign of Edward VI., in 1552, had a special article against the literal idea of the Millennium: “They that go about to revive the fable of the heretics, called Millenarii, be repugnant to Holy Scriptures and cast themselves headlong into a Jewish dotage.”²

The doctrine of the Millennium, explained as the personal reign of Christ with His saints on earth, was revived in the seventeenth century. Joseph Mede (A.D. 1627) in his *Clavis Apocalyptica* advocated Millenarian views, which had nearly become extinct in the Christian Church. In Germany, after the strenuous opposition of the Lutheran scholastics to the doctrine, a reaction began with Spener, the founder of the Pietists; but the chief impulse to the revival of the doctrine was given by the illustrious and saintly Bengel (A.D. 1740). The chief importance of his system, according to Auberlen, “consists in this, that he brought to light again a truth of Scripture which had been misapprehended for nearly fifteen centuries, namely, the doctrine of the Millennial kingdom.”³ From that time numerous Millenarian writers have arisen in the Christian Church, and have advanced various theories concerning the personal reign of Christ on earth.

¹ Article XI. “Damnamus præterea Judaica somnia, quod ante judicii diem aureum in terris sit futurum seculum, et pii regna mundi occupaturi, oppressis suis hostibus inpiis.”

² Article XII., quoted in Wordsworth *On the Apocalypse*, p. 25, and by Lee, *Speaker's Commentary*, N. T., vol. iv. p. 813.

³ Auberlen, *Daniel und die Offenbarung Johannis*, p. 273, translation.

The modern school of the so-called Millenarians¹ gives a literal interpretation to the prophetic language; but there is among them a vast variety of opinion concerning the precise nature of the Millennium. Almost all of them, however, believe in the pre-millennial advent of Christ; in the first resurrection as a reality and restricted to the saints; in the personal appearance of Christ and His reign with His saints a thousand years before the resurrection of the wicked and the final judgment; and in the restoration of the earth to a paradisiacal condition. A strong Jewish element is discernible in most of the Millenarian writings: the Jewish interpretation of the Messianic prophecies is not only excused, but defended; the Jewish tradition of the seventh thousand year being the Millennium is adopted; the Jews will have the pre-eminence among the nations; and, according to many of these speculators, the Temple of Jerusalem will be rebuilt, the old Levitical priesthood will be established, and the various sacrifices and distinctive rites of Judaism will be renewed.² This is certainly a return to what Paul terms "beggarly elements." These opinions have been more or less held and advocated by several clergymen, especially of the Church of England; as, for example, Elliott, Edward Bickersteth, Birks, and Bishop Ryle. And although the extravagant notions which are promulgated by several of these writers are not adopted, yet a modified view of

¹ We have in this, as in similar instances, to employ a name as a term of designation, although not strictly appropriate.

² "The temple worship," says Molyneux, "with its various rites and ceremonies, will be restored, and sacrifices will again prevail."—*Israel's Future*, p. 252.

the Millennium, including the personal reign of Christ with His saints, is held by such distinguished German theologians as Hofmann,¹ Delitzsch, Kurtz, Beek, Auberlen,² and in our own country by Alford. "On one point," observes Alford, "I have ventured to speak strongly because my conviction on it is strong, founded on the rules of fair and consistent interpretation. I mean the necessity of accepting literally the first resurrection and the Millennial reign."³

It is unnecessary to give specimens of the views of the modern Millenarians, showing the extent to which they go and the extravagance of the opinions which many of them entertain. We shall restrict ourselves to the views of the Rev. E. B. Elliott, who has for long been regarded as the great expounder of unfulfilled prophecy, and, although his fame has now greatly waned, is still the best representative of these views.⁴ We give his words slightly condensed and without comment: "It would seem that in this state of things and of feeling in professing Christendom, suddenly and unexpectedly and conspicuous over the world, as the lightning that shineth from the east even to the west, the second advent and appearing of Christ will take place; that at the voice of the archangel and the trump of

¹ *Weissagung und Erfüllung*, ii. p. 372 f.

² *Der Prophet Daniel und die Offenbarung Johannis*.

³ Alford's *Greek Testament*, vol. iv., Prolegomena, p. 252; also on Rev. xx. 4-6.

⁴ Whatever learning Elliott may display, yet we must call in question the judgment and good sense of that interpreter of prophecy who gravely affirms that the Reform Bill proceeded from the frog that came out of the mouth of the dragon, and the Catholic Emancipation Bill of 1829 from the frog that came out of the mouth of the false prophet. *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, vol. iv. pp. 29, 35, 2nd edit.; pp. 31, 35, 3rd edit.

God the departed saints of either dispensation will rise from their graves to meet the Lord all at once and in the twinkling of an eye ; that then suddenly the saints living at the time will be also caught up to meet Him in the air ; these latter being separated from out of the ungodly nations, as a shepherd divides his sheep from his goats ; and all, both dead and living saints, changed at the moment from corruption to incorruption, and all welcomed to enter on the inheritance and kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Meanwhile it would also appear that with a tremendous earthquake the solid crust of this earth shall be broken and fountains of liquid fire burst forth from its inner depth, and engulph the vast territory of Papal Babylon and the godless of its inhabitants ; thence spreading to Palestine, making the very elements to melt with fervent heat ; and that there the flame shall consume Antichrist and his confederate kings, while the sword also does its work of slaughter. And then immediately the renovation of this earth will take place ; its soil being purified by the very action of the fire for the nations of the saved, that is, the Gentile remnant and restored Israel ; and the Spirit too poured out from on high to renew the moral face of Nature ; and that thus the Millennial commencement of Christ's eternal reign with His saints is to begin ; the Shekinah or personal glory of Christ amidst His saints being manifested chiefly in the Holy Land and at Jerusalem, but the whole earth partaking of the blessedness ; and thus the regeneration of all things and the world's redemption from the curse having their accomplishment accord-

ing to the promise at the manifestation of the sons of God.”¹

There is no foundation in Scripture for the resurrection of the saints and the personal reign of Christ before the last judgment which shall terminate the present economy. The sole passage on which it rests is found in the obscurest book of Scripture, and is expressed in enigmatical terms. There is indeed mention of a first resurrection, but it is to be observed that it is not a resurrection of all believers, but is expressly limited to a particular class, namely, the martyrs and confessors—to those that “had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and such as worshipped not the beast, neither his image, and received not the mark upon their foreheads and upon their hand” (Rev. xx. 4). Nor is it a corporeal, but a spiritual resurrection that is mentioned—a resurrection not of their bodies, but of their souls. Nor is there any mention of a personal reign of Christ on earth; those who have part in the first resurrection are to reign with Christ a thousand years; but whether this reign is to be on earth or in heaven, whether it is to be literal or spiritual, is not stated. The general consensus of Scripture is entirely opposed to this idea of a literal reign of Christ on earth with His saints. The second coming of Christ is throughout Scripture connected with the final judgment. He shall appear a second time upon the earth, and that for judgment. The resurrection shall occur immediately before the judgment. All shall be raised

¹ *Horæ Apocalyplicæ*, vol. iv. pp. 221-227, 2nd edit.; pp. 224-231, 3rd edit.

from their graves ; the righteous and the wicked shall be summoned to appear before the tribunal of their great Judge and King. v

Other theologians, in their interpretation of the Millennium, have revived the opinion of Augustine, namely, that the Christian era is the Millennium ; that Christ by His advent into the world, and especially by His death, effectually restrained the power of Satan ; that He then caused Satan to fall like lightning from heaven (Luke x. 18) ; so that we are not to expect a future Millennium, because we are actually living in it. The period of a thousand years is not to be taken with exact literalness, but denotes an indefinitely protracted period ; in short, extends from the coming of Christ into this world to the close of the Christian dispensation. This opinion has been adopted by Bishop Wordsworth, Archdeacon Lee, Bishop Boyd Carpenter, and other distinguished theologians. Thus Archdeacon Lee observes : "The reigning of the Church militant on earth, as well as of the Church triumphant in heaven with Christ since His incarnation, has been referred to in chap. v. 10. Hence it follows that it is only the faithful who have been born since the date of the incarnation who both live and reign with Christ."¹ And elsewhere he says still more explicitly, "By the thousand years are to be understood a long though finite duration, beginning from the first advent of Christ."² And Bishop Wordsworth remarks : "The commencement of the thousand years here mentioned, whatever that period

¹ *Speaker's Bible*, N. T., vol. iv. p. 796, Excursus on the Millennium.

² On Rev. xx. 2.

may signify, is to be dated from the first coming of Christ.”¹

A modification of this notion, which may be termed the Idealistic view of the Millennium, has recently been advanced. According to this view, the thousand years do not denote a period of time, but a quality. Like the other mystic numbers of the Apocalypse, it must be mystically interpreted; it is the symbol of completion, and refers to the complete victory of Christ over Satan. Here the ideal state of the Church is represented; Satan is completely overcome; believers reign with Christ; they are kings and priests unto God; they are raised to heavenly places with Christ Jesus. “The vision,” observes Professor Milligan, “describes no period of blessedness to be enjoyed by the Church at the close of the present dispensation. Alike negatively and positively, we have simply an ideal state of results effected by the Redeemer for His people, when for them He lived and suffered and died and rose again. Thus He bound Satan for them; He cast him into the abyss; He shut him in; He sealed the abyss over him; so that against *them* he can effect nothing.” “This is the reign of a thousand years, and it is the portion of every believer who in any age of the Church shares the life of His risen and exalted Lord.”²

The supposition that the whole Christian era is the Millennium cannot be defended. It is contrary to the order of events as recorded in the prophecy. It is after the series of events mentioned in the former part of the

¹ Wordsworth's *Greek Testament* on Rev. xx. 1.

² Milligan *On the Revelation*, pp. 347, 348.

book, after the destruction of Antichrist and the false prophet, toward the close of the present dispensation, that the Millennium is to occur. Besides the past history of the world, its wars and vices, the fearful atrocities which have been committed, and which rival in enormity the crimes even of Nero or Domitian—as, for example, the atrocities committed by Philip II. of Spain and under the French Revolution of last century—and the very limited influence of Christian principles, forbid the supposition that the past Christian era is the Millennium. “According to this view,” observes Bleek, “the times of the Middle Ages, with the greatest splendour of the Papacy, and the age of the Reformation as well as that after the Reformation, are supposed indiscriminately to be the thousand years’ kingdom, including times when the most horrible deeds were perpetrated by the Romish Church and other ruling powers against true confessors of the Lord, as in the wars against the Albigenses and Waldenses, against the Huguenots, in the Inquisition, and the night of St. Bartholomew, as well as many others.”¹ The opinion that those who are in possession of the benefits purchased by Christ are living in the Millennium is meagre and inadequate to satisfy Christian aspiration. If we are not permitted and encouraged to look forward to a purer and more glorious era—in a word, to a Millennium of a more exalted Christianity, to a truer and more fully realised ideal—the victory of Christ must appear less signal and complete.

We give our adherence to those who adopt a figura-

¹ Bleek's *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, p. 102.

tive interpretation and the idea of a spiritual millennium. They who favour this opinion¹ believe that the Millennium is entirely spiritual, and think that the expressions used in the description of it are metaphorical, and refer to a glorious revival of the Church from a state of lethargy, or it may be of prevalent unbelief, to that zeal and constancy and faith and patience which were displayed by the martyrs—a revival so great that it may well be denominated a resurrection, even “life from the dead.” According to this view, it is supposed that there is in store for the Church on earth a protracted period of religious fervour, when not only will Christianity become the religion of the world, but when the spirit of Christianity will animate the human race. Antichrist will be finally overcome; the power of Satan will be curtailed: he will no longer be permitted to persecute the saints of the Most High; and the kingdoms of this world will become the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ. The idea of the first resurrection is explained by the words of our Lord. He speaks of two resurrections—the one spiritual and occurring in this life, “The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God;” the other corporeal² and occurring at the end of the world, “The hour cometh in the which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth” (John v. 25, 28). “There are,” observes Augustine, “two resurrections—the one, the first and

¹ So Urwick, Dr. David Brown, Bishop Waldegrave, Bleek.

² On the nature of the resurrection body, I may be permitted to refer to my *Treatise on the Resurrection*, published several years ago, 1862, chap. iii., “The nature of the raised body.”

spiritual, which has place in this life, and preserves us from coming into the second death ; the other, the second, which does not occur now, but in the end of the world, and which is of the body, not of the soul, and which by the last judgment shall dismiss some into the second death, and others into that life which has no death.”¹ “It is certain,” observes Bleek, “that we decide in accordance with the sense of the book itself, when we consider the thousand years’ kingdom as a state of development belonging to the Church or kingdom of God, which has not yet appeared.”²

It is not supposed that all men during the Millennium will become true believers, or that the corrupt tendencies in human nature will then be destroyed.³ The tares and the wheat will grow up together until the harvest. There will always be a mixture of the righteous and the wicked. But during the Millennium the righteous will be in the great majority, and their influence will be predominant. At the close of the thousand years, we are informed there will be a strong reaction of the powers of evil. The restraint under which Satan was kept will be removed ; he will be loosed out of his prison, and shall come forth to deceive the nations, and shall seduce multitudes countless as the sand of the sea (Rev. xx. 7, 8) ; and shall become so bold and fierce in depravity as to aim at the destruction of the saints. Hence those who adopt the spiritual view of

¹ Augustine, *Civitas Dei*, xx. 6.

² Bleek’s *Lectures on the Apocalypse*, p. 102.

³ “Not only,” observes Dr. Simcox, “does the natural order of the world go on ; but there must be some sort of moral evil remaining to account for the end of this age of peace.”

the Millennium suppose that throughout the whole period there will always be some who will remain unbelievers; that these will gradually increase in numbers and importance as the Millennium draws to a close, until at length they shall become so numerous as to contend with believers for the mastery. The greater the restraints which are placed upon wickedness and wicked men, so much the more violent will be the reaction when these restraints are removed. Just as in England, the strict and severe age of the Puritans was succeeded by the most licentious age that has ever disgraced the annals of our country; so, in a similar manner, it is supposed that the age of millennial purity will be succeeded by an era of lawless depravity and irreligion.

There is considerable variety of opinion as to the duration of the Millennium. In the Apocalypse it is said to last for a thousand years. This also accords with the Jewish notion of the Millennium. Some, we have seen, deny that a period is stated at all. Others understand the thousand years literally as ordinary years. Others interpret them prophetically, according to the year-day system, a day being taken for a year; and accordingly they believe that the Millennium will in reality last 365,000 years. Nor is the vastness of this period any objection; for geology has disclosed to us as vast cycles in the past, and "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years." But perhaps a large number is here used to denote an indefinitely long period, and that the meaning is that this prosperous state of the Church will continue for a very long space of time.

The time of the Millennium has also been a matter of

much discussion. Grotius¹ and Hengstenberg² consider that it is past; Lee, Wordsworth, Boyd Carpenter, and Milligan think that it is present; but the great majority of writers on the subject regard it as future.³ Those writers who are designated Millenarians generally consider the time as at hand. Some mark the signs of the times, national, political, and religious, which, as they think, prognosticate the coming of Christ. Some have even the temerity to fix upon the precise year, and to determine the precise date of that day which our Lord Himself tells us no man knoweth, not even the angels which are in heaven. Thus Bengel fixed upon the year 1836.⁴ Elliott, in one portion of his work, fixes on the year 1865 or thereabouts as the probable epoch of the consummation; and in another part of his work he says, "The end of the six thousand years of the world, and the opening of the seventh millennium by approximation, will be about A.D. 1862; the same year, very nearly, that we before fixed on as the epoch of the consummation, on quite different data."⁵ Such calculations are both extravagant and presumptuous, directly opposed to the rebuke which our Lord administered to His disciples when He said, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father hath set within His own authority" (Acts i. 7).

¹ According to Grotius, the Millennium extended from the fourth to the fourteenth century.

² Hengstenberg makes the Millennium to extend from the Christianising of the German nations to the downfall of the German Empire.

³ From these are of course excluded those German theologians who regard the Apocalypse as containing fallacious expectations.

⁴ Außerlen, *Daniel and the Revelation*, p. 369.

⁵ *Horæ Apocalypticæ*, vol. iv. p. 252 and p. 260, 2nd edit.; p. 255 and 264, 3rd edit.

Viewing the matter in one light, the time appears far distant. The world is far removed from a state of millennial purity ; the greater portion of it has yet to be Christianised ; there is no abatement of wars and rumours of wars—no symptoms of universal peace ; infidelity appears to be on the increase, and to be closely bound up with the great socialistic upheaval on the Continent ; and the character of many who profess Christianity show how little they are influenced by its spirit. If religion progresses at the rate it has hitherto done in the past, it will take thousands of years before the Millennium occurs. But viewing things in another light, there are more pleasing signs. There are symptoms of a more rapid spiritual progress. The different Churches have been stirred up to greater zeal in the cause of missions ; the Bible has been translated into almost every tongue ; countries, formerly closed, are now thrown open for the reception of the Gospel ; districts, concealed for thousands of years, have now been explored ; the means of communication between different nations have been amazingly increased ; tyranny has been shaken on its throne, and religious toleration is now recognised by the nations of Europe. This age is peculiarly an age of progress, and who knows but that these things may be the forerunners of a glorious revival of religion, a great spiritual resurrection, and may usher in the morning of that glorious day when the world will be filled with His glory, and when all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

CONCLUDING DISSERTATION.

INFLUENCE OF ST. JOHN ON CHRISTIANITY.¹

LITERATURE.—The influence of John on Christianity is a subject which requires yet to be discussed. The following works may be mentioned :—1. On the conciliatory character of the Fourth Gospel : Baur's *Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche*, erster Band, pp. 44-50 and pp. 94-100 (Tübingen, 1863 ; dritte Ausgabe, English translation, vol. i. pp. 44-56 and 84-107) ; Ritschl, *Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche* (Bonn, 1857, zweite Auflage) ; Reuss' *History of Christian Doctrine* ; Schaff's *Apostolic Times* ; Schaff's *Church History*, vol. i. pp. 74-86 ; Weiss' *Biblical Theology*, vol. ii. pp. 312-323. 2. On the Mystics : Kahnis' *History of German Protestantism* (translation, Edinburgh, 1856) ; Dorner's *History of Protestant Theology* ; Stowell on the *Work of the Holy Spirit* ; Ritschl's *History of Pietism*. 3. On the Theology of the Inner Life : Schleiermacher's *Reden* and *Der Christliche Glaube* ; Lichtenberger's *History of German Theology of the Nineteenth Century* ; Pfeleiderer's *Development of Theology* ; Articles on Schleiermacher by Gass in *Herzog's Real-Encyclopädie*, and by Schaff in *Encyclopædia of Biblical Theology* ; Maurice's *Theological Essays*.

ACCORDING to the hypothesis of Baur and the Tübingen school, there are taught in the New Testament several phases, systems, or types of Christian doctrine, two of which are sharply antagonistic. In particular, there is a Jewish or Petrine Christianity, inculcated by Peter

¹ A work on the influence of John, similar to that of Pfeleiderer's *Hibbert Lectures* for 1885 on the influence of Paul, is greatly to be desired.

and James, and by John in the Apocalypse, the three Apostles of the circumcision, which required from the Gentiles obedience to the law of Moses, and which was represented, at least in its extreme form, by the views of those Judaising teachers who were the opponents of the Apostle Paul. According to this system, a man was justified by the works of the law in combination with faith in the Gospel. And there is also a Gentile or Pauline Christianity, inculcated by Paul, the Apostle of the uncircumcision, which relieved the Gentiles from obedience to the ceremonial law of Moses, and which is especially taught in the Epistle to the Galatians. According to this system, the ceremonial portion of the Mosaic law was abolished, and a man was justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Between these two systems there was not only a difference, but an antagonism : the Gospel of the circumcision was opposed to the Gospel of the uncircumcision, and hence the Christian Church was in imminent danger of being split up into two factions or sects.¹ The Council of Jerusalem, it is maintained, where the question of the imposition of the Jewish law on the Gentiles was discussed, did not settle it, but the conclusion arrived at was of the nature of a compromise. The Jewish Christians agreed not to enforce circumcision on the Gentiles, whilst the Gentile Christians consented to certain legal restrictions to conciliate the Jews, and the representatives of the two systems agreed not to interfere with each other's teaching ; the one

¹ See Baur's *Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche*, vol. i. p. 44 ff. ; English translation, vol. i. p. 44 ff. Also the admirable dissertation of Bishop Lightfoot, "St. Paul and the Three," *Commentary on the Galatians*, pp. 283-355, third edition.

was to go to the circumcision, and the other to the uncircumcision (Acts xv. 18-20; Galatians ii. 9, 10). "The three principal representatives of the Church of Jerusalem did indeed give to Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, but the agreement which was arrived at consisted simply in recognising that each party had a right to go his own way, separate from and independent of the other. Thus there were now two Gospels—a Gospel of the circumcision, and a Gospel of the uncircumcision, a mission to the Jews, and a mission to the Gentiles. The two were to go on side by side, separate and independent, without crossing each other's path. . . . So decided an attitude of opposition did the two standpoints now assume; on the one side was the Apostle Paul, refusing with immovable firmness to be shaken, even for a moment, on any point which his principles required him to maintain, or to yield any compliance to the proposals addressed to him; on the other side, were the older Apostles, clinging tenaciously to their Judaism."¹ This antagonism between Jewish and Gentile Christianity, according to this view, continued throughout the whole of the apostolic age, at least until the death of Paul. We see not only traces of it, but proofs of its inveteracy in the conduct of those Judaizing teachers,² who dogged the footsteps of the Apostle of the Gentiles.

In process of time, however, according to the Tübingen school, this antagonism by degrees disappeared, and Jewish and Gentile Christianity were united in Catholic

¹ Baur's *Kirchliche Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 51; Eng. trans., pp. 53, 54.

² Baur held that these Judaizing teachers were not heretics, but disciples, if not even actual emissaries, of the Apostles of Jerusalem.

Christianity.¹ Various causes combined to produce this reconciliation. The opposition of the Roman Empire without, and the growth of Gnostic heresies within the Church, made it essential, for the existence of Christianity, that a reconciliation should take place, and that the Church should display a united front against its foes. The destruction of Jerusalem made the Jewish Christians less persistent in maintaining their peculiarities, and the death of Paul lessened the opposition to Judaism among his followers. "In view," observes Pfleiderer, "of the growing dangers from without and within, the most urgent task put before the Christian Church of the first half of the second century, was to reconcile, in complete ecclesiastical unity, Jewish and Gentile Christians, and at the same time to give stable organisation to the Church by the development of its offices, as representative of ecclesiastical tradition and authority."² Each system was modified, and the points of difference between them were toned down; one antagonistic element after another was abandoned; and at length the reconciliation was effected on the principles laid down in the Gospel and Epistles of John.³ On the one hand, the change through which Jewish Christianity lost its original form consisted in this, that after the Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed the outward observance of the Jewish ceremonial law was no longer insisted on,

¹ *Idem*, pp. 94 ff., *Die Vermittlung*; Eng. trans. p. 99 ff., "The Reconciliation."

² Pfleiderer's *Hibbert Lectures* for 1885, p. 247; see also Purves' *Testimony of Justin Martyr to Early Christianity*, p. 83.

³ The reconciliation was supposed to be largely effected by the rite of baptism becoming the substitute for circumcision. Baur's *Church History*, vol. i. pp. 105-109.

and the works requisite for salvation were not the external works of the law, but works springing from a sanctified disposition, from a principle of love, and from a new life implanted in the soul. On the other hand, the faith required by Paulinism was not regarded exclusively as faith in the atonement of Christ, but as faith in a wider sense in its relation to God, a faith seen in absolute dependence on God, actuated by love, and indeed almost transformed into love. "The Jewish-Christian and the Pauline doctrine," observes Baur, "are here (in John's Gospel) blended together in a higher unity. Faith has the same inwardness in which its value consists with Paul; but its object is not the death of Jesus, with its efficacy for the forgiveness of sins, but the whole Person of Jesus as the incarnate Logos; or since Jesus, as One sent, cannot be thought of apart from His intimate oneness with Him who sends Him, the object of faith is God Himself." "Faith and works are merged in love, their higher unity."¹ Hence then love was the reconciling factor, and this is prominently brought forward in the Johannine writings. Thus the Gospel of John was, in a pre-eminent sense, the Gospel of reconciliation; in it Christianity found its unity; the discordant elements disappeared, and a Catholic Church was the result; Petrinism and Paulinism were merged in Johannine Catholicism.

A modification of this hypothesis of Baur, and which is the view now generally adopted by the Tübingen school, was advanced by Ritschl. He maintained that

¹ Baur's *Kirchliche Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 171; Eng. trans., vol. i. pp. 178, 179.

Jewish Christianity gradually disappeared in consequence of the destruction of Jerusalem and the secession of the Ebionites, the extreme Jewish Christians, from the Christian Church; and that consequently Catholic Christianity was not the result of any compromise. Gentile Christianity or Paulinism was gradually toned down in the course of events. "We affirm," he observes, "that Catholic Christianity did not arise from a reconciliation of Jewish and Gentile Christians, but that it was a stage of Gentile Christianity alone."¹ According to Ritschl, the change that took place in Paulinism was that "faith ceased to be subjective faith in the atoning death of Christ apart from the law; to it was added the observance of the divine will, or of the law of Christ, as a means of justification, redemption, and salvation in a legal sense." Baur maintains that the reconciliation took place by both tendencies approaching each other; whilst Ritschl's position is that it arose from a development of Gentile Christianity, without assuming a compromise with Jewish principles.²

This hypothesis of Baur is marked by much ingenuity, learning, and critical acumen, and is carried out with remarkable ability and consistency. It has greatly influenced our views of Biblical theology. There are in it elements of truth, but these elements are distorted by exaggeration. It is undoubtedly true that there are several distinct systems of doctrine in the New Testament, and we are considerably indebted to Baur for bringing

¹ Ritschl, *Die Entstehung der allkatholischen Kirche*, p. 23.

² Ritschl held that Baur's assumption regarding the antagonism between Pauline and Petrine Christianity at least enormously exaggerated its magnitude, its influence on the Canon, and its duration.

this fact prominently forward.¹ There are writings which may be considered as more pervaded by Jewish elements, as, for example, the Epistle of James, which is apparently addressed to Jewish Christians; and there are writings which may be regarded as more pervaded by Gentile elements, as, for example, the Pauline Epistles. But whilst this variety of doctrinal types is admitted, there is no antagonism between these two sets of writings; there are no traces of two opposing kinds of Christianity, either in the New Testament itself, or, with the exception of the Clementines and certain other heretical books, in the recognised writings of the Fathers. In the writings of Justin Martyr, for example, one of the earliest of the Fathers, there are no traces of this antagonism.² It has been proved that the writers of the New Testament look upon the same truths from different standpoints, and that the variety in their views only discloses the fulness and many-sidedness of revelation.

Further, we admit with Baur that there are three different phases of Christian doctrine, namely, the Petrine, or, we would rather say, the Jacobean, the Pauline, and the Johannine, as seen in the Epistle of James, the Pauline Epistles, and the Johannine writings. Each of

¹ It must, however, be remembered that the science of Biblical theology, which consists in the consideration of the different types of doctrine in the New Testament, is much older than Baur. Neander, especially, had before Baur considered the psychological differences of the inspired writers. Baur, by his views, brought the subject into greater prominence. He exaggerated the differences, and explained them, not by the personality of the writers, but by party spirit.

² See on this point some excellent remarks in Purves' *Testimony of Justin Martyr to Early Christianity*, Lecture iii., "The Testimony of Justin Martyr to the Relations of Gentile and Jewish Christianity."

these possesses a separate and distinct character. It is a remarkable fact that these writings belong to different times, and represent different stages in the growth or development of Christianity. The Epistle of James, as is now generally admitted, is the earliest book of the New Testament, unless a priority be assigned to the Gospel of Matthew, to which it bears a close resemblance, when Christianity was chiefly confined to the Jewish nation; the Pauline Epistles succeed, following on the extension of Christianity to the Gentiles; whilst the writings of John were the last of the sacred books, and represent the full growth of Apostolic teaching. "They run parallel," observes Dr. Schaff, "with the three sections of the history of missions—the Jewish mission centering in Jerusalem, the Gentile mission with its seat in Antioch, and the activity of John, which took up, and combined, and completed these two, and had its centre in Ephesus."¹ Others add a fourth phase of Christian doctrine, the Petrine; but Petrine theology, as contained in the two Epistles of Peter, with the exception of his eschatological views, is less definite and less developed than the other three. It is intermediate between the Jacobean and the Pauline systems.²

Baur's representation of these three systems, as representing the Jewish, the Gentile, and the Catholic phases of Christianity, has a certain degree of truth in it. The

¹ Schaff's *Apostolic Times*, vol. ii. p. 316.

² Besides these Apostolic types of Christian doctrine, there is also to be added what may be termed the Synoptic type of doctrine, or the doctrine of Jesus according to the Synoptists. This, however, is not properly a separate type of doctrine, as it contains in germ what was fully developed in the Apostolic writings. See Weiss' *Biblical Theology*, part i.; Bruce's *Kingdom of God*.

Jacobean may be called a Jewish Christian theology ; here the chief element is works or evangelical obedience. The Jewish law is spiritualised ; Christianity is the development of Judaism, the obedience required is that which arises from a living faith. The Pauline may be called a Gentile Christian theology ; here the chief element is faith. Christianity is regarded as a new creation ; man can only be saved by a living faith in Christ, by a faith which evidences its reality by a holy disposition—a faith which is actuated by love. The Johannine may be called a Catholic Christian theology, as it embraces the other two ; here the chief element is love, a love which embraces both works and faith, the holy disposition which the Gospel seeks to produce. Here Christianity attains its full development. In a certain sense Johannine theology may be considered as a higher stage than either the Jacobean or the Pauline.¹ “As James and Peter,” observes Neander, “mark the gradual transition from spiritualised Judaism to the independent development of Christianity, and as Paul represents the independent development of Christianity in opposition to the Jewish standpoint, so the reconciling contemplative element of John forms the closing point in the training of the Apostolic Church.”² There is, it is admitted, a certain development of Christianity traceable in the writings of the New Testament, but nothing approach-

¹ “If Peter was appointed by the Lord to lay the foundation of the Apostolic Church, and Paul to build the main structure thereon, John, the Apostle of completion, was to erect the dome, whose top should lose itself in the glory of the new heaven.”—Schaff’s *History of the Christian Church*, vol. i. p. 78.

² Neander’s *Planting of Christianity*, vol. ii., p. 57, Bohn’s edition.

ing to that antagonism so prominently advanced by Baur and the Tübingen school, the assumption of which lies at the foundation of their theological system.

Such, then, is the importance of the Johannine writings as regards apostolic Christianity. There is a catholicity about them; they unite both Jewish and Gentile Christianity. Their influence upon the post-apostolic Christian Church has next to be considered. There are especially four elements which pervade Johannine theology, and which have influenced, in a greater or less degree, and at different periods, the Christian Church.

1. Love is the key-note of the Johannine writings; John is in a pre-eminent sense the apostle of love. The obedience inculcated by James, and the faith insisted on by Paul, find their union in the love dwelt upon by John.
2. The inner life is another characteristic feature of Johannine theology; the religion here inculcated is more a religion of feeling than either of action or of the reason. A spiritual life is implanted within the soul, and finds its realisation in the contemplation of God and communion with Him. This life consists in union with Christ, and through Him with God the Father, and is Eternal Life begun on earth.¹
3. The Fatherhood of God is a third great truth brought prominently forward by John. God is the Father of Christ, and through Him the Father of all believers. His love is that of a Father, and His dealings with us are those of a Father to his children. The recognition of the Fatherhood of God is the source of all strength and comfort in the

¹ This feature is closely connected with the mysticism of John, adverted to in next paragraph.

religious life. 4. But especially the doctrine of the Logos—His pre-existence and operations in pre-Christian times, His incarnation in the Person of Jesus Christ, and His being at once the Light of the world and the Life of men, constitutes a prominent part of the teaching of John.

Along with these characteristic ideas, there is another peculiarity of Johannine theology to which we have also made special reference, which has exercised much influence on the Christian Church, and that is its mysticism.¹ "The principal characteristic of mystic theology," observes Reuss, "is that of directness, of intuition, as opposed to reflection, dialectic demonstration, which is the leading feature of all non-mystical or rational theology. . . . It is the essence of mysticism to foster feeling rather than reflection."² The three leading ideas—Light, Life, and Love—which pervade the writings of John are connected with mystical theology. "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John i. 5); and our Lord Himself declares, "I am the Light of the world" (John viii. 12; ix. 5). God is Life, and Christ is the manifestation of that divine Life: "In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men" (John i. 4). God is Love (1 John iv. 8); and Christ is the incarnation of Love, the descent of Love into this world. These three—Light, Life, and Love—which properly speaking are not the properties or attributes of God, but constitute His essence, are seen in the incarnation of the Logos in the Person of Jesus Christ. And, in consequence of our

¹ See *supra*, pp. 239, 240.

² Reuss' *History of Christian Theology*, vol. ii. pp. 376, 377.

union with Christ, we are made partakers of these properties: we walk in the Light as He is in the Light, we are made partakers of the new Life, and Love is the essence of our Christian character. So also, as we have had frequent occasion to remark, the theology of John is chiefly internal; it is the religion of the inner life; of that life which, as Paul says, is "hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 2). It is the ideal conception of Christianity; salvation is already accomplished; he that is born of God sinneth not; eternal life is already conferred on believers; the future is lost sight of in the present; or rather, the present is so highly idealised that the future is in a considerable measure overlooked; along with a future there is a present resurrection and a present judgment; all these are elements of a mystical character.

Now it is these characteristic ideas of John—the pre-eminence of love, the inner life, the Fatherhood of God, and especially the Logos as the Light and Life of men, combined with this high mysticism, that is the secret of his influence on Christianity. That influence has not been so marked, so powerful, so all-pervading, or so continuous as that of the Apostle Paul; probably because John's theology has not been so fully understood and realised, inasmuch as it addresses itself to the heart rather than to the intellect, and demands a congeniality of spirit with John before we can fully enter into his views. When, however, we consult the writings of the early Fathers, we clearly discern the influence of John's teaching, especially on those who were of a philosophical turn of mind. Justin Martyr, who before his conversion was an eclectic philosopher, and who never laid

aside the dress of a philosopher, does not indeed directly mention John, but his doctrine of the Logos is evidently taken not from Philo, but from the Fourth Gospel. According to Justin, the Logos is of the same essence with the Father, yet distinct from Him; He was before all creatures; He was incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth; He was born, baptized, suffered, died, and rose again for us men and for our salvation.¹ Especially does Justin insist on the Logos as influencing the thoughts of the heathen philosophers and as the cause of their virtues. All that is true and beautiful in them must be traced to the Logos as the Life of men. The Logos through Socrates condemned the errors of the Greek religion.² Whatever either lawgivers or philosophers uttered well, was done by them through a contemplation of the Logos; but since they did not recognise all the teachings of the Logos, who is Christ, they often contradicted each other.³ All these writers were able to see realities darkly through the sowing of the implanted Logos who was in them.⁴ Irenæus quotes more from John than from any of the other writers of the New Testament, and his theology is largely pervaded with Johannine ideas.

But especially the Alexandrian school of theology, represented by Pantænus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen, and Dionysius, drew largely from the writings of John, and imbibed much of his spirit in their theology. They especially insisted on the Logos, actuating those who lived before the Christian era, as the Light and Life of

¹ Purves's *Testimony of Justin Martyr*. Lecture iv. "Influence of Philosophy on Early Christianity." Hatch's *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 261-268.

² Justin, *Apol.*, i. 5.

³ *Apol.*, ii. 10.

⁴ *Apol.*, ii. 13.

men. Clement affirmed that Christianity is the heir of all past time and the interpreter of the future; that heathen philosophy, as well as Judaism, was an instructor to bring men to Christ.¹ Origen, especially, was deeply imbued with the Johannine spirit. He calls the Fourth Gospel "the main Gospel," and says that those only can comprehend it who lean on the bosom of Jesus, and there imbibe the spirit of John, just as he imbibed the spirit of Christ.² The Alexandrian school perverted the mysticism of John, as if there were an exoteric system of doctrine for Christians in general, and an esoteric system for the initiated, resembling the heathen mysteries. The early Greek Church of the fifth and sixth centuries, the Church of Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Basil of Cæsarea, and Chrysostom, may be considered as Johannine, being pervaded by the spirit of John rather than by the spirit of Paul or of James.

Augustine, however, the great theologian of the Western Church, and whose influence there was paramount, is a representative not of Johannine, but of Pauline theology. He indeed wrote a long commentary on the Gospel of John with a just appreciation of the spirit of John and full of lofty conceptions, but nevertheless his doctrines are derived chiefly from the Epistles of Paul. His influence extended throughout the Middle Ages, and, for this among other reasons, during that period Johannine theology was in a measure overlooked and neglected in the Western Church. The

¹ The idea of the Logos influencing the thoughts and lives of the heathen philosophers pervades the writings of Clement.

² See also *supra*, p. 77.

theology of the Romish Church is rather Jacobean than either Pauline or Johannine; the letter prevailed over the spirit; works rather than faith or love were regarded as the predominant feature of Christianity.¹

Mysticism in all its different forms² derives its inspiration chiefly from the writings of John. In the Middle Ages mysticism was a reaction against scholasticism and worldliness. Men and women withdrew from the world, and cultivated in monasteries and nunneries a purely subjective piety. In the hymns of St. Bernard the influence of John is predominant. Tauler³ and Thomas à Kempis are examples of heightened mystic piety; and the work of the latter, the "Imitation of Christ," pervaded throughout with the spirit of John, has been translated into all the languages of Europe,⁴ and nourished the inner spiritual life of multitudes. After the Reformation mysticism was a reaction against formalism and a stiff and barren orthodoxy. In Germany there arose the school of the Pietists—Spener, Joachim Lange, Francke, Arndt, and Oetinger—men elevated above ordinary Christians, who cultivated communion with God, whose religion was that of the heart, and who were absorbed in the love

¹ The Pauline doctrine of justification by faith was in the Romish Church overwhelmed by a heap of carnal ordinances and services. It was not until the Reformation that Paulinism was revived.

² Stowell distinguishes four forms of mysticism: 1. Speculative mysticism, as represented by Tauler and Coleridge. 2. Contemplative mysticism, represented by the Quietists of France. 3. Imaginative mysticism, represented by Swedenborg. 4. Practical mysticism, represented by Ignatius Loyola. Stowell's *Work of the Spirit*, pp. 193-229.

³ Tauler, born about 1294, was the great preacher among the Mystics.

⁴ Next to the Bible, the "Imitation of Christ" is the most universally translated book in the world. It is said that in 1828 its various editions and translations amounted to two thousand.

of God. Their mysticism was more of a contemplative than of an ecstatic nature, and found its exercise in prayer, the study of the Scriptures, and devout contemplation.¹ The Jansenists and the Quietists of France—Fénélon and Madame Guyon—are also examples of Johannine Christians. Swedenborg and his followers derived their mysticism more from the Apocalypse than from the Gospel of John. The English Mystics, such as the Quakers of the seventeenth and the Methodists of the eighteenth century, were more influenced by the teaching of John than by that of Paul or of James. There are all the other mystic sects, who, notwithstanding much that is extravagant, command our admiration for their devotion and high-toned piety. The characteristic element in all these systems was the Johannine idea of the inner life—that Christ, as the Light of the world, dwelt in their hearts. All these, among whom religion was contemplative and internal, are certainly the offshoots of Johannine Christianity.

Protestantism, generally considered, was the evolution of Paulinism; it was the revival of the theology of Augustine; it drew largely from the intellect; it expressed itself in formulated systems of doctrine, and, accordingly, was less amenable to the influence of John. Both Luther and Calvin, the two great theologians of Protestantism, were Pauline Christians. The doctrine of justification by faith was the root-idea of the systems of both.² Hence, a century or two after

¹ See Kahn's *History of German Protestantism*, p. 97 ff., English translation.

² According to Luthardt, the centre of Lutheranism is justification by faith, and of Calvinism the sovereignty of God.

the Reformation, the Church drifted into rationalism, which was the perversion of Paulinism, or settled down into a barren orthodoxy: the intellect was cultivated, whilst the heart was neglected.

A revival of Johannine theology took place at the commencement of this century in Germany, chiefly under the influence of Schleiermacher, a revival which has spread into this country, and has, for a time at least, materially influenced our theology. Those who belong to this school place the greatest stress on Christianity as the infusion of a new life into humanity. Christ, as the Life of the world, came to impart this life to the human race. Christianity was with them chiefly internal; religion is neither knowledge, nor willing, nor action, but feeling, and especially the feeling of dependence.¹ Hence, they do not lay stress upon what is external in religion; with them the evidences of Christianity are internal rather than external; these do not consist so much in miracles and prophecies as in the experience of the truth and in its adaptation to the Christian consciousness. We must feel the truth in order to know and believe it. With the heart, rather than with the intellect, man believeth unto righteousness.

Friedrich Schleiermacher (born 1768, died 1834), is considered by his admirers, next to Calvin, as the greatest of modern theologians, and as the founder of German theology of the nineteenth century. "As a theologian," observes Schaff, "he ranks among the

¹ Kahnis calls the theology of the school "*Die Dogmatik des religiösen Gefühls.*"

greatest of all ages." As Calvin was the interpreter of Pauline theology, so Schleiermacher is the interpreter of Johannine theology. He imparted new life into German theology when it was in a morbid condition, wavering between an ossified traditionalism and a lifeless rationalism. He broke the spell of both, and, as a creative genius, introduced a new era in the study of theology. His celebrated *Discourses on Religion addressed to the Educated among its Despisers*¹ appeared in 1799, at a time when intellectual Germany could hardly be called Christian, and when theology as taught in the colleges, and religion as inculcated from the pulpit, was almost entirely negative. These discourses made a great stir in Germany, and many of the most illustrious men of that age drew from them their first impressions of religion. Schleiermacher brought Christian theology prominently to the front, not only as the highest of all sciences, but as a spiritual creation.

Schleiermacher combined a critical spirit with ardent piety. He had himself passed through a great spiritual crisis of religious doubt, and used to call a strange scepticism his thorn in the flesh, from which he never entirely obtained deliverance. The writings of John were his chief study, and from them he derived his inspiration. His love for the Saviour was intense, and he regarded Christ's life in the soul as the essence not only of all true Christian life, but of the spiritual life of the world in all the departments of the arts and sciences. He adopted as his keynote the words of John,

¹ *Reden über Religion an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verächtern.*

that in Christ was "life, and the life was the light of man."¹

No man has been more differently judged than Schleiermacher. Some question his claims to be a great Christian theologian. The most opposite views have been taken of his opinions. He has been regarded as a pietist, a rationalist, a pantheist,² and even an atheist. Others consider him as the greatest theologian who has arisen since the days of the Apostles. It is admitted that his theology was in many respects defective, hazy, and mixed with much that is erroneous. Like John the Baptist, he pointed out the new era, but he did not himself enter upon it; his position in the German Church was like that of Origen in the Greek Church, the greatest among the Fathers, yet the most assailed.³ Toward the close of his life his opinions became clearer and more evangelical. His scientific theological system may have been ambiguous, inadequate, and imperfect; but, on the other hand, his sermons, which have been translated,⁴ are evangelical in their tone; in them he distinctly maintains the great fundamental truths of

¹ See an interesting and affecting account of the death of Schleiermacher in Lücke's *Reminiscences of Schleiermacher*, prefixed to the English translation of the *Outlines of Theology*, pp. 84, 85; also *Life and Letters of Schleiermacher*, by Frederica Rowan, translated from the German.

² That his philosophy was pantheistic has been alleged by a host of writers in his day; but this charge he indignantly repudiates. See *Sendschreiben an Lücke*.

³ For the theological views of Schleiermacher see Kahnis' *History of German Protestantism*, p. 204 ff.; Schwarz, *Die Geschichte der neuesten Theologie*, 1856, p. 28 ff.; Lichtenberger, *History of German Theology*, pp. 101-165; Pfeiderer, *Development of Theology*, p. 103 ff. For an appreciative account of Schleiermacher and his views see article on him in *Herzog's Real-Encyclopädie*, by Gass.

⁴ *Selected Sermons of Schleiermacher*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1890.

Christianity, and avows his belief in the bodily resurrection of our Lord;¹ they are the discourses not of one who is groping in the darkness, but of one who has found the truth. His great personality has made a lasting impression upon the age. His followers have gone beyond him in the direction of more positive and evangelical statements. The school of Schleiermacher numbers among its disciples the most distinguished theologians of Germany of the past age belonging to the positive school: Neander, Twesten, Lücke, Nitzsch, Dorner, Ullmann, Bleek, Julius Müller, Tholuck, Hofmann, Harless, Rothe, Lechler, Frank (of Erlangen), and many others were more or less influenced by his opinions.² Neander especially, by his vast learning, his Platonic spirit, his innate perception of the truth, his intense devotion, his childlike disposition, his simplicity combined with profundity, and his entire forgetfulness of self, was perhaps the noblest example of a Johannine Christian. The maxim on which he acted was, "It is the heart that makes the theologian."³

¹ It has been often asserted that Schleiermacher did not believe in the fact of Christ's resurrection; but in Sermon XV., "Christ's Resurrection, an Image of our New Life," this is distinctly asserted.

² "The object of Schleiermacher," observes Kalnis, "was not to found a school, but to stimulate, and that he gained in a most extraordinary degree. One can well imagine what an influence such a man, in connection with De Wette and Neander, must have exercised on the immediate sphere of his activity. In the newly-founded University of Bonn, Nitzsch, Bleek, and Sack laboured together in the spirit of Schleiermacher. In Breslau Gass was the practical echo of his friend. Lücke in Göttingen and Schweizer, now in Zurich, followed entirely in the steps of the master. And how large is the number of theologians on whom Schleiermacher has exerted a decisive influence. We mention only Baumgarten Crusius, Hase, Ullmann, Tholuck, Müller, Rothe, Dorner."—*History of German Protestantism*, p. 243.

³ *Pectus est quod facit theologum.*

In England a similar revival of Johannine theology, as distinguished from Paulinism—a subjective rather than an objective theology—the religion of feeling rather than of the intellect, arose. Coleridge was among the first who gave emphasis to this phase of religious life. With him Christianity consisted not so much in the belief of certain dogmas, as in an inner personal experience of spiritual life—in a Christian consciousness.¹ “The affinity of his theology with Schleiermacher’s,” observes Pfleiderer, “especially as represented by the conservative wing of Schleiermacher’s school, strikes the student at once.”² But the great representative of the theology of feeling is Frederick Denison Maurice, who may well be denominated the English Schleiermacher. He also imbibed to a large extent the spirit of John. He made the Gospel, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse of that Apostle the subject of his special study,³ and thus his theology partook largely of that love and mysticism which characterise the Johannine writings. Even his writings bear a resemblance in point of style to those of John; there is the same combination of simplicity and profundity, along with much that is mystical and difficult for an ordinary reader to understand and appreciate. According to Maurice, the Logos, who became incarnate in Jesus Christ, is the Light and Life of every man that cometh into the world. He is the great King of the souls of men. He is the spirit of all history. It is this living Christ in the world and in

¹ Coleridge’s *Aids to Reflection*.

² Pfleiderer’s *Development of Theology*, p. 310.

³ Maurice wrote commentaries or discourses on the Gospel of John and on the Apocalypse.

the soul that explains Christianity, and is the reason of its success and diffusion.¹ Maurice especially dwells upon the Fatherhood of God, which Christ came to reveal. He brings prominently forward this great truth, which appears for ages to have been lost sight of. Christ came to tell us that we have a Father in heaven who pities us, who wishes not our death, who sent His Son to redeem us.

Few men have exercised such an important influence on English religious thought as Maurice. The nobleness and simplicity of his character, the peculiar flavour of mysticism about his opinions, the earnestness of his piety, the intensity of his love for man, his sympathy especially with working men, and even the persecutions which he endured, drew around him a band of earnest men who recognised him as their master. He formed no special school, but his opinions have greatly modified the teaching of the present day. It has influenced the discourses from the pulpit. These are now less doctrinal and more addressed to the Christian consciousness.²

The Christianity of our days is perhaps the Pauline phase of theology. The doctrines of the vicarious sufferings of Christ and of justification by faith, by whatever terms these doctrines may be represented, still hold

¹ See *Discourses on the Gospel of St. John*, passim, and Note I on Baur's Theory of the Gospels. *Theological Essays*, especially Essay V., "On the Son of God."

² In Scotland, Erskine of Linlathen, Macleod Campbell, and Bishop Ewing, more or less influenced by Maurice, may be considered as the exponents of the Johannine spirit. The sermons of Robertson of Brighton, which have so greatly influenced modern sermons, are just the expositions of Maurice's views.

the pre-eminence; the vindication of the law and the righteousness of God are still chiefly dwelt upon. This is the theology of Protestantism; it is dogmatic, logical, objective. But there are symptoms that we are diverging from it. The writings of Maurice and those belonging to his school of thought are in the direction of Johanninism. The pre-eminence of love, the new life in the soul, the Fatherhood of God, union with Christ, the Logos as the light and life of men; the work of the Spirit, eternal life as a present blessing, are now prominently brought forward. Paul is the Apostle of Protestantism, but John is said to be the Apostle of the future. The theology of the intellect may be succeeded by the theology of the heart. "The doctrinal system of John," observes Schaff, "is the highest and the most ideal of all; the one towards which the others lead, and in which they merge. It wonderfully combines mystic knowledge and love, contemplation and adoration, profound wisdom and childlike simplicity, and is an anticipation of that vision, face to face, into which, according to Paul, our fragmentary knowledge and faith itself will finally pass."¹

There are many speculations regarding the Church of the future, the ultimate realisation of Christianity.² Whether all denominations of Christians will be swallowed up in a common Christianity, we know not; but one thing of which we may be perfectly sure is, that the love inculcated by John will be the spirit which shall prevail. This will form the basis of Christian union,

¹ Schaff's *Apostolic Church*, vol. ii. p. 351.

² See on the Church of the future, Bartlett's *Dampton Lectures*, 1888, Lecture viii.

and however men may differ in their opinions, they will be perfectly joined together in love, and every vestige of theological bitterness will disappear. In the present unsettled state of theological views we require a great theologian to arise to give a full view of Gospel truth and to grasp it in its entirety, embracing all the three phases of Christianity, and promulgating a theology more rational than that of Romanism, more human than that of Calvinism, and more divine than that of Arminianism; one who, like Luther, will embody in his person the spirit of the age, and, like him, bring forth some regenerating truth from the obscurity in which it has lain buried for ages, wield that truth by the overpowering force of eloquence combined with the mighty and irresistible rushing wind of the Spirit. We may be fast approaching the age of the Spirit, when religion will be not only understood but felt, when men will be rescued from infidelity, agnosticism, and materialism by a living faith—a faith which says, “I believe, because I see and know.” We greatly need this spiritual influence in a world of doubt, scepticism, and materialism on the one hand, and of luxury, mammon-worship, and indifference on the other, when a new Pentecostal age will dawn upon the world, and when Christianity will prove its divine origin by its supernatural effects on the human race.

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